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LIFE AND INTRODUCTION.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, like Swift and Steele in the preceding generation, Edmund Burke among his contemporaries, and R. B. Sheridan among his successors, was an Irishman; for his family, though of Saxon extraction, had been for some generations settled in Ireland. He was born on November 29, 1728, in an unpretending parsonage at Pallas, an out-of-the-way and almost inaccessible hamlet in the county of Longford. His father, Charles Goldsmith, was a clergyman of the then Established Church; his mother, Anne, was daughter of the Rev. Oliver Jones, master of the Diocesan School at Elphin. Oliver Goldsmith was the second son in a family consisting of four sons and two daughters. Of his strong family affection we have ample proofs. Seldom has a son left a picture of a father drawn with such fond fidelity as that of the village preacher in the *Deserted Village*; and his correspondence shows how warmly he was attached to his brothers, and especially to his eldest brother, Henry, to whom *The Traveller* is dedicated.

When Oliver was two years old, his father was made rector of Lissoy, or Lishoy, in Westmeath; here the young poet's education began at the hands of a maid-servant, Elizabeth Delap, by whom he was taught his letters, and pronounced "impenetrably stupid." In his seventh year he was promoted to the village school; for the limited income of his father, already strained to the utmost in providing for the education of his eldest son, could ill

bear any increased expenditure: his new instructor—one Thomas Byrne, of aboriginal Irish descent, an enthusiastic admirer and, in his own way, an imitator of the ancient Irish bards—had been quarter-master in the army, and had seen service in the war of the Succession in Spain; and he probably formed the mind of his young pupil more by wonderful legends of banshees and rapparees, and no less marvellous narratives of his own adventures, than by direct instruction in the rudiments of learning. Yet the boy, even at eight years, shewed precocious signs of poetical genius—"he lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

It had been originally determined that Oliver should be put to a trade when comparatively young, for the small income and large family of his father seemed to make it impossible for him to receive as thorough an education as his elder brother; but soon after this time the entreaties of his mother produced a change in the family plans, and Oliver was removed from the village school, first to Elphin, then to Athlone, and lastly to Edgeworthstown, that he might be prepared for the University. As a school-boy he was quick and clever, though certainly not too industrious; but he gave sufficient promise of future excellence to induce some wealthy friends and kinsmen—among whom may be mentioned especially the Rev. Thomas Contarine—to contribute largely to the expenses of his education.

On June 11, 1744, he was admitted as a sizar to Trinity College, Dublin; but his career was not to be as successful as his friends had fondly hoped. The tutor under whom he was placed was harsh, violent, and unsympathetic; the pupil was thoughtless, eccentric, and irregular: he neglected his legitimate studies to write street-ballads, which he sold for five shillings apiece, and then broke the college-rules by stealing out of gates at

night to hear them sung. On one occasion, to celebrate his success in gaining an exhibition of the value of thirty shillings, he gave a dance in his attics to some gay friends in the city. Hence we find him, after receiving some perhaps unnecessarily stern chastisement from his tutor, selling books and clothes, intending to embark at Cork to try his luck in foreign parts ; but spending his last shilling in Dublin, and finally, through his brother's intercession, sullenly consenting to a reconciliation with his tutor, and returning to college. Indolent, though occasionally brilliant, he did not graduate till 1749 ; and then followed two years of idleness, vagrancy, and thoughtlessness. No profession could be found for which he was fitted ; the church and the bar were both attempted, but without success—a pair of scarlet breeches is said to have excluded him from the one, and an imprudent fit of gambling from the other—and his perpetual escapades and adventures must have seriously embarrassed his widowed mother, and tried to the utmost the long-suffering affection of that paragon of uncles, good Mr. Contarine.

At the end of the year 1752, Goldsmith was sent to Edinburgh to study medicine, but '*caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt* ;' and his Scotch career was characterized by the same heedlessness, good nature, and desultoriness which had marked all his previous life. Though his attendance in the class-rooms of the professors had been by no means regular—for he had tried a tutorship with the Duke of Hamilton, travelled on pony-back in the Highlands, and gambled and sung his hours away—in a year or two's time he thought himself sufficiently advanced in medical science to ask for his uncle's consent to a sojourn at Leyden to complete his studies. Thither accordingly he set out, embarking in a Scotch ship bound for Bordeaux, choosing a somewhat circuitous route to his journey's end. But by a fortunate mistake Goldsmith,

with some others of the ship's company, was detained in gaol at Newcastle, while the ship proceeded on her voyage, and was lost with all hands at the mouth of the Garonne; and Goldsmith reached Leyden, *viâ* Rotterdam. Here he resided about a year, devoting some of his time and energy to the lectures of the medical professors, and more to the pleasures of the gaming-table. Then he determined to leave Holland for the purpose of extending his foreign travels; but of the money lent to him for that object, he squandered the greater part in play, spent all the rest in a present of the rarest and most costly flower-roots for his uncle in Ireland, and started on his European tour a penniless pedestrian, with one clean shirt and his flute; but with a good constitution, a light heart, and abundance of animal spirits.

An extract from *The Vicar of Wakefield*, put into the mouth of the wanderer, George Primrose, is said to furnish a tolerably accurate account of Goldsmith's ordinary mode of providing the necessaries of life during his travels: "I had some knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice, and now turned what was my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants of Flanders, and among such of the French as were poor enough to be very merry, for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant's house towards nightfall I played one of my most merry tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next day. . . . In all the foreign universities and convents there are upon certain days philosophical theses maintained against every adventitious disputant, for which, if the champion opposes with any dexterity, he can claim a gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. In this manner therefore I fought my way towards England, walked along from city to city, examined mankind more nearly, and, if

I may so express it, saw both sides of the picture." He travelled through Flanders, parts of France and Germany, through Switzerland and the north of Italy, taking an uncongenial tutorship at Geneva, and abandoning it at Marseilles, staying for six months and perhaps graduating in medicine at Padua, visiting Verona, Florence, and Venice ; and finally, after the death of his good uncle, who had probably contributed in part to his maintenance, landing at Dover in 1756.

The poet arrived in London, as he himself says, "without friends, recommendation, money, or impudence." His plain face, shabby dress, Irish brogue, and eccentric antecedents, made it difficult for him to get employment. He first became an assistant master in a school, but it is uncertain how long his flighty genius endured the irksome monotony of such an occupation. He is next found helping in a chemist's laboratory near Fish Street Hill ; and soon after, through the kind assistance of Dr. Sleight, an old Edinburgh fellow-student, he set up as an independent physician, at first at Bankside, Southwark, and afterwards in the Temple. But his medical skill was but small ; the fact of his degree in medicine is very doubtful ; the only patient whom we know that he doctored, he killed, and that was himself ; and Beauclerk's witticism is well known ; "I do not practise," said Goldsmith ; "I make it a rule to prescribe only for my friends." "Pray, dear doctor," was the reply, "alter your rule, and prescribe only for your enemies." His patients, by his own account, were numerous, but unremunerative, and he began to practise literature as a second string to his bow. Thus he became a literary hack, or, in his own words, "a regular Swiss in the service of the booksellers ;" and so "with very little practice as a physician, and very little reputation as a poet, he made a shift to live."

But though Goldsmith had now touched the outer

circles of the literary world, no one seems at present to have guessed the genius of the young *littérateur*, nor was he himself conscious that poetry and literary composition was to be henceforth his main employment. Indeed for some time he returned to the profession which he had found so disagreeable, and became, for £20 a year, superintendent of a school at Peckham; and in 1758 he was appointed physician to a factory in India. The chief obstacle that prevented him from at once setting sail to amass untold wealth in the East, on a salary of £100 a year, was that he had not money enough to pay for his outfit and passage. He had previously published works of minor importance—a “catch-penny” *Life of Voltaire*, completed in four weeks, for twenty pounds; and *The Memoirs of a Protestant condemned to the Gallies of France for his Religion*, for which he received the same sum—but now he was to venture something greater. Accordingly all his friends in England and Ireland were importuned to circulate proposals for the publication by subscription of an *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Literature in Europe*. This work did more for its author than raise a sum sufficient for his Indian outfit; it raised his value in the eyes of the booksellers, and as their patronage increased, his visions of Oriental riches waned. He published *The Bee*, contributed criticisms to various reviews and newspapers, wrote regularly for the *Monthly Review* for half a year, was regularly retained by Newbery, the publisher, at a salary of £100 a year, made the acquaintance of Smollett and other literary friends, and advanced from squalid and ill-, or almost un-furnished, lodgings in Green Arbour Court, Old Bailey, to a more respectable habitation in Wine-office Court, Fleet Street. During his residence here he first met Dr. Johnson, who was then the king, not to say the tyrant, of the literary world. About twenty years older than Gold-

smith, he had himself known what it was to fight his way through difficulty and disappointment to eminence and fame in the world of letters. The fortitude with which he had borne his troubles had not hardened his heart, nor was his real nature less warm and sympathetic because his manners were *brusque* and his exterior rough. With these two acquaintance soon ripened into friendship, and friendship became intimacy. Here also Goldsmith wrote *The Vicar of Wakefield*; but no sooner was this work finished than his landlady arrested him for arrears of debt. Goldsmith, in extremities, sent off to Johnson, who came at once, and took the manuscript to Newbery, to whom he sold it for sixty pounds, and thus obtained the freedom of his friend. The book, however, was not published for two or three years, not indeed till Goldsmith had gained reputation by the publication of *The Traveller*, which was even at that moment lying finished in his desk.

During the years 1762, 1763, and 1764 he was engaged in literary work of a miscellaneous character: history, biography, criticism, essay-writing, occupied him in turn. His works include a *Life of Beau Nash*, an *Art of Poetry*, *Letters on English History*, and especially a series of letters reprinted from *The Ledger*, and republished under the title of *The Citizen of the World*. He was also gradually advancing, in spite of much recklessness and imprudence, to an important position in the literary society of the time. His friends were now more numerous and influential, and his first-floor apartments at No. 2, Brick Court, in the Temple, were furnished in a manner suitable to the distinguished society whom he used to entertain there. In 1764 began the meetings of that celebrated Literary Club, which the pages of Boswell have rendered so familiar. It was originally proposed by Sir Joshua Reynolds, to Johnson and Burke, and Goldsmith was at

once admitted as one of the original nine who met for supper and conversation on Fridays at the Turk's Head, in Gerard Street, Soho.

In 1765 *The Traveller* was published. Part of it had been written by him during his travels in Switzerland ; but the poem had arrived very slowly at completion. For two years or more, encouraged by the approval of Dr. Johnson, it had been the delight of Goldsmith's few leisure hours to polish and prune this his masterpiece. The effect produced by its publication was soon visible : four editions were required within eight months, and Goldsmith rose from the position of a comparatively obscure essayist to that of the first poet of the age. Very soon after this *The Vicar of Wakefield* appeared ; and the ballad of *The Hermit*, which is inserted in the novel, and also was printed separately, confirmed the author's reputation as a poet.

But Goldsmith was now to show the wide range of his powers by distinguishing himself in an entirely fresh branch of literature. In January, 1768, his comedy, *The Good-natured Man*, was produced for the first time, under George Colman the elder, at Covent Garden. It had been written some little time before, and was originally offered to Garrick for representation at Drury Lane ; but after much hesitation, in spite of the strong recommendation of Johnson and Burke, it was rejected. Nor indeed, though it obtained £500 for its author, and was introduced to the public by a prologue written by Johnson, did it prove a great success. Cumberland, Kelly, and the sentimental comedy were victorious, and after a short run of nine or ten nights it was withdrawn, and Goldsmith was not heard of again as a theatrical author for five years.

The Deserted Village appeared in May, 1770. It is said that Goldsmith was four or five years collecting the materials for this poem, and that the actual composition

extended over more than two years. This is very probable; for we know that it was only during the intervals of prose composition that he could apply himself to this labour of love. It was to his prose writings that he had to look for his daily bread. "Pay no regard to the muses"—such is his advice to a friend—"I have always found productions in prose more sought after and better paid for. . . . By courting the muses I shall starve; but by my other labours I shall eat, drink, have good clothes, and enjoy the luxuries of life." He wrote popular histories—a *History of England*, for five hundred pounds; a *Roman History*, and an abridgment of the *Roman History*, *Lives of Parnell and Bolingbroke*, besides introductions and prefaces to books by other authors. But these works, though highly praised by Dr. Johnson and other contemporary critics, were not of any great permanent value. Goldsmith had not the painstaking conscientiousness in the investigation of details which alone can make a man a great historian; nor does he take a much higher rank as a biographer. Still, in all his writings he shows that easy and fascinating style which Johnson said would make a Natural History by him as entertaining as a Persian tale.

However, the reputation of Goldsmith as an historian must have been very considerable; for on the establishment of the Royal Academy of Painting, in 1768, the honorary office of Professor of Ancient History was conferred on Goldsmith. In a letter to his brother Maurice, dated January, 1770, he alludes to his new appointment: "The king has lately been pleased to make me Professor of Ancient History in a Royal Academy of Painting which he has just established; but there is no salary annexed, and I took it rather as a compliment to the institution than any benefit to myself. Honours to one in my situation are something like ruffles to one that wants

a shirt." After Goldsmith's death the professorship was given to Gibbon, who was succeeded in his turn by Mitford, the historian of Greece.

After a short visit to Paris with two ladies, named Horneck, during the summer of 1770, Goldsmith retired to the solitude of a farm-house, near the sixth mile-stone on the Edgware Road, where he was far enough from London smoke and noise to enjoy the refreshing air of the country, and yet near enough to partake sufficiently freely of London life and London pleasures. Here he occupied himself partly with a new comedy, partly with his *Natural History*. On September 7th, 1771, he writes to Bennet Langton, Esq.: "The *Natural History* is about half finished, and I will shortly finish the rest. God knows, I am tired of this kind of finishing, which is but bungling work, and that not so much my fault as the fault of my scurvy circumstances." However, *The History of the Earth* and of *Animated Nature* did not appear till 1774. For this extensive work, in eight vols. 8vo., the author received from his publisher £850. He was not a naturalist any more than an historian; as deficient in powers of scientific observation as in taste for historical research; his facts were obtained secondhand,* and the most grotesque travellers' tales are told with a charming innocence and credulity; but the book is as good as wide, though desultory reading, dignified reflections, and a graceful style can make it. The comedy, which he was writing at the same time, had appeared previously. After rejecting the title, *The Old House a New Inn*, Goldsmith resolved to call it, *The Mistakes of a Night; or, She Stoops to Conquer*. It was first acted in March, 1773, under George Colman, sen., at Covent Garden. It was dedicated to Dr. Johnson; and the author writes

* *Ex. gra.* he repeats after Buffon that cows shed their horns every third year.

in the dedication: "The undertaking a comedy, not merely sentimental, was very dangerous; and Mr. Colman, who saw this piece in its various stages, always thought it so." So true was this, that Colman, probably remembering the failure of *The Good-natured Man*, was induced only by the most importunate solicitations of Goldsmith's friends to give it a trial. But the play was at once a success, and has ever since held its ground as an established favourite of the British public.

The story of the rest of Goldsmith's life is soon told. Even in comparative affluence he was not prosperous. It is calculated that in twelve months he received eighteen hundred pounds for his writings; yet he was never out of debt, and was perpetually moody and perturbed on account of money matters. He spent much in various pleasures, especially in his early vice of gambling. He spent more in charity, or in what seemed to him to be charity. His ears, heart, and purse, were alike open to any tale of distress; he was simple, credulous, impulsive as a child, and kept by his liberality an army of compatriot scribblers out of well-merited penury. His literary labours were unremitting. His last design was to publish *An Universal Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences*, to which all his literary friends were to contribute articles on the subjects with which they were most familiar; but this design was interrupted by his last illness. Two short poems, *The Haunch of Venison* and *Retaliation*, with some other fugitive verses, were written about this time, and published after his death.

In the spring of 1774 a malady to which his spasmodic fits of sedentary work made him specially liable attacked him with unusual violence; aggravating circumstances produced fever; on March 25th the case was serious; the patient persisted, contrary to the advice of his physicians, in doctoring himself; and he died on April 4th, aged 45.

Goldsmith was buried in the Temple burying-ground, and his friends raised a subscription for his monument in Westminster Abbey, and a large medallion by Nollekens, with an inscription by Dr. Johnson,* was placed in the Poets' Corner, between the monuments of Gay and the Duke of Argyle.

The face on this medallion is said to be a tolerably good likeness of Goldsmith; but the mere bodily features are in his case the least interesting part of the man. His face, which in his early childhood had given little promise of beauty, had been fearfully disfigured by the small-pox when he was eight years old; the wan, sickly child grew into a pale-faced, pock-marked, ungainly boy, and these characteristics he always retained; in figure, thick-set and clumsy; in face, uninteresting even to ugliness. Yet these physical defects had doubtless considerable influence in shaping the character of the man. As a child, he was shy; as a youth, proud; as a man, sensitive. Half the anecdotes which have been told in disparagement of Goldsmith have been due either to his ill-governed pride or his morbid self-consciousness. His discontent with his position as sizar at Dublin, his dissatisfaction with his tutorship at the Duke of Hamilton's, where he fancies himself "liked more as a jester than companion," his incurable objection to the subordinate situation of an usher may be traced to the former; while his sensitive disposition rendered him unfit to shine in society, especially in the society of the Turk's Head, where the imperious tyranny of Johnson, though genial and considerate to him personally, and the petty self-conceit and jealousy of Boswell, "the arch malice of Garrick, and the polished sneer of Beauclerk," must have combined to stifle all the little conversational power which he possessed. This same

* This epitaph contains the famous eulogium, "*Qui nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit, nullum quod tetigit non ornavit.*"

quality laid him open to charges of vanity and envy ; for, as Mr. Forster remarks, " Too little self-confidence begets the forms of vanity ;" and a self-conscious man betrays by word or look the passing feeling which a man of greater self-control more prudently conceals. Another curious trait connected with his external peculiarities was his love of finery in dress. One fact which he never forgot was that he was a gentleman ; and yet he was conscious that nature had scarcely given him the appearance of gentility. Consequently he tried to compensate for the defect by striking, but too often laughable, effects in dress ; and from the time when the scarlet breeches secured for him his rejection as a candidate for Orders, to the purchase of the peach-blossom coat which prompted Garrick's sarcasms, this eccentricity was always exposing him to ridicule.

But if he was quick to take offence, he was even quicker to pardon ; if he was ready to feel, and even to show a transient bitterness or jealousy, he was far more ready to love those who were kind to him, and to sympathize with the distressed. He was always open-hearted and open-handed ; equally incapable of niggardliness and dissimulation ; to give and to forgive came naturally to him. Of course there were some who failed to appreciate him, and accordingly felt no compunction in making the sensitive nature of " little Goldy " the theme of unfeeling jokes, and more who had no scruple in playing off their impostures on his unsuspecting and indiscriminate generosity. Let us then make the most of his faults ; let us say the worst we can of the disappointing indolence and " masterly thoughtlessness " of his youth, and of the incorrigible improvidence and provoking weakness of his whole life ; but all this cannot for a moment be balanced against the virtues which have made him the most loving, loveable, and loved of British writers. Sympathy, generosity, un-

selfishness, gentleness, and purity of feeling ; these were the qualities that won the hearts of the worthiest of his contemporaries, and have endeared him to all succeeding generations ; which made Burke burst into tears, and Reynolds desert his studio, on hearing of his death, and prompted Johnson to say to the recording Boswell : " Let not his failings be remembered ; he was a very great man ; " which crowded his staircase in the Temple with weeping outcasts, while the coffin was re-opened that the lovely Mary Horneck might obtain a lock of his hair. They loved him as men love a gifted, affectionate, though sometimes wayward, child ; we love him as an example of genius in its most innocent, kind-hearted, and attractive guise.

In what then does the special charm and attraction of Goldsmith's writings consist ? The answer is threefold : it lies partly in his diction, partly in his subjects, partly in his mode of treating his subjects.

His language is always singularly refined : just as in society he never forgot that he was a gentleman, so in writing he never forgot what was due to himself and what to his readers. Composing with consummate ease, he is never vulgar ; handling the most familiar subjects, he never condescends to buffoonery or loses his self-respect. Again, his style is particularly clear and luminous : many of his sentences we read twice over ; but it is not to remove an obscurity, but to deepen our admiration of the thought or expression. But though his words are happily chosen, with little apparent effort, or straining after effect, he cannot be acquitted of occasional negligence and carelessness ; though never vulgar, he is sometimes slipshod.

Deficient in imagination, but excelling in observation, Goldsmith selected his subjects from within the range of his own experience ; though this is more or less true of many writers, perhaps of all, and especially true of Eng-

lish novelists, who, from Fielding to Dickens, have made themselves the heroes of their own novels, it applies to Goldsmith in a pre-eminent degree. It would be possible, with a small exercise of ingenuity, to reconstruct his character out of his works by the light of internal evidence; and not only his own, but the characters of the more prominent members of his family. Indeed he was a close and accurate observer of the men and things around him, yet neither penetrative nor scientific. The short poem, *Retaliation*, is sufficient proof of his powers of observation, where the sketch of Edmund Burke is quite inimitable; but he had little imagination. When he proceeds beyond the limits of his personal experience, instead of rising, like Shakespeare, to his most wonderful creations, he becomes ineffective; thus the delineation of the horrors of the tropics, in *The Deserted Village*, is tawdry and inexpressive compared with the familiar picture of Irish desolation. *The Vicar of Wakefield* is imperfect as a sketch of English provincial life, but has created for us at least one character which will never die. It was this same defect which made Goldsmith fail lamentably as a critic; for he gave his warmest admiration to those works which appealed least to the imagination. He had little sympathy with Shakespeare or Milton, and preferred Tickell to Thomson, Parnell to Gray. Another result was that the ideas with which he had to work were limited in number: his characters reappear in new dresses, and even his images are often repeating themselves. But within this limited range he was supreme. Just as a great general with a small but well-drilled army will accomplish more than more numerous troops under inferior leadership, so Goldsmith, from the absolute control in which he held his intellectual forces was more effective than many other writers who cannot discipline the exuberant and fantastic creations of their brain.

Lastly, in the treatment of his subjects he was, as Dr. Johnson describes him in his epitaph, "Sive risus essent movendi, sive lacrymæ, affectuum potens, sed *lenis* dominator:" in all his humour there is pathos, and in his pathos humour. True to nature, he knows that smiles and tears are separated by no wide interval; and his comedy never degenerates to farce, nor his sentiment to sentimentality. His fidelity to nature forms perhaps his chief title to the position of a great poet; a fidelity, exhibited not only, as we have seen, in the delineation of a character, but also in the details of a description. In this he presents a marked contrast to his contemporary Gray, who depicts nature as seen through the mirror of books or of classical phrases; the recluse of the university cloister is seen in every line, while with Goldsmith we feel that we are in the company of one who has wandered amid all sorts of scenery and mixed in all kinds of society, and who reproduces his genuine impressions at first hand.

To sum up his strength and weakness, he was at his best "*naturæ minister et interpres,*" and yet "*tantum facit et intelligit quantum de naturæ ordine re vel mente observaverit: nec amplius scit aut potest.*"

“THE TRAVELLER:”

OR, “A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY.”

INTRODUCTION.

THIS poem was originally published in quarto, and made its appearance on December 19, 1764: the date it bears is 1765. Goldsmith had been engaged upon it for a long time. It is certain that a rough sketch of part of it had been previously sent by the poet to his brother Henry, probably during his travels in Switzerland; and it is not unlikely that other parts were designed, if not actually written, during his travels. At last the poem was completed by the advice of Dr. Johnson, who himself added some of the closing lines. The poet received twenty guineas for it from the publisher, Newbery. Its success at its first appearance was not instantaneously striking; but in eight months it ran through four editions. Johnson declared that it was the greatest poem which had appeared since the days of Pope; and it is said that he had been seen to weep over the lines which describe the English character. At any rate, in a short time the fame of Goldsmith was established; and it was felt that a new poet had arisen among the literary men of the capital.

The Traveller was dedicated by the poet to his brother, Rev. Henry Goldsmith. One or two sentences of the dedication must be quoted: “It will throw a light upon many parts of it” (*sc.* the poem) “when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year. I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest

is great, and the labourers are but few; while you have left the field of ambition, where the labourers are many, and the harvest scarce worth carrying away. . . . Poetry makes a principal amusement among unpolished nations; but in a country verging to the extremes of refinement, painting and music come in for a share. As these offer the feeble mind a less laborious entertainment, they at first rival poetry, and at length supplant her, they engross all that favour once shown to her, and, though but younger sisters, seize upon the elder's birthright. . . . What reception a poem may find which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right. Without espousing the cause of any party, I have attempted to moderate the rage of all. I have endeavoured to know that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own, that each state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous success."

Throughout the poem two characters are visible—the exile, wandering in foreign lands and sighing for his country, to which distance is lending its enchantment; and the political philosopher, inculcating his paradoxical theory that one form of government is as conducive to human happiness as another. With Goldsmith in his former character all must thoroughly sympathize. He is always charming when he is drawing on the rich stores of his personal experience; and here his own individuality seems to inspire his criticisms and his complaints. But to Goldsmith as a political philosopher we must take exception. Though it is true that under the best of governments some men would probably remain miserable, while under the worst some few may attain to happiness, it is far more true that some forms of government do more for the happiness of the individual than others. A government conducted with a view to the greatest good of the greatest number may possibly make mistakes, and occasionally defeat its own objects; but it will at any rate be more productive of happiness than the rule of a selfish and irresponsible Oriental despot, a ποιμὴν λαῶν, who regards his subjects as his flock, to be fleeced or devoured at his pleasure.

10 Back for Friday

THE TRAVELLER.

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheld, or wandering Po ;
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door ;
Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies, 5
A weary waste expanding to the skies ;
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee ;
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain. 10

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend :
Blest be that spot, where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire :
Blest that abode, where want and pain repair, 15
And every stranger finds a ready chair :
Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crowned,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale ; 20
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destined such delights to share,
My prime of life in wandering spent and care :
Impelled with steps unceasing to pursue 25
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view ;

That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
 Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies ;
 My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
 And find no spot of all the world my own. 30

E'en now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
 I sit me down a pensive hour to spend ;
 And, placed on high above the storm's career,
 Look downward where a hundred realms appear—
 Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide, 35
 The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.

When thus creation's charms around combine,
 Amidst the store should thankless pride repine ?
 Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
 That good which makes each humbler bosom vain ? 40
 Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
 These little things are great to little man ;
 And wiser he whose sympathetic mind
 Exults in all the good of all mankind. 44
 Ye glittering towns with wealth and splendour crowned ;
 Ye fields where summer spreads profusion round ;
 Ye lakes whose vessels catch the busy gale ;
 Ye bending swains that dress the flowery vale ;
 For me your tributary stores combine :
 Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine ! 50

As some lone miser, visiting his store,
 Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er ;
 Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
 Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still :
 Thus to my breast alternate passions rise, 55
 Pleased with each good that Heaven to man supplies :
 Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
 To see the hoard of human bliss so small ;
 And oft I wish, amidst the scene, to find
 Some spot to real happiness consigned, 60
 Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
 May gather bliss, to see my fellows blest.

But, where to find that happiest spot below,
 Who can direct, when all pretend to know ?

The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone 65
 Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own ;
 Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
 And his long nights of revelry and ease ;
 The naked negro, panting at the line,
 Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine, 70
 Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
 And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.

Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
 His first, best country, ever is at home.
 And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare, 75
 And estimate the blessings which they share,
 Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
 An equal portion dealt to all mankind ;
 As different good, by art or nature given,
 To different nations makes their blessings even. 80

Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
 Still grants her bliss at labour's earnest call ;
 With food as well the peasant is supplied
 On Idra's cliff as Arno's shelvy side ;
 And though the rocky-crested summits frown, 85
 These rocks, by custom, turn to beds of down.
 From art more various are the blessings sent—
 Wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, content.
 Yet these each other's power so strong contest,
 That either seems destructive of the rest. 90
 Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails,
 And honour sinks where commerce long prevails.
 Hence every state, to one loved blessing prone,
 Conforms and models life to that alone.
 Each to the favourite happiness attends ; 95
 And spurns the plan that aims at other ends ;
 Till, carried to excess in each domain,
 This favourite good begets peculiar pain.

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
 And trace them through the prospect as it lies : 100
 Here, for a while my proper cares resigned,
 Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind ;
 Like yon neglected shrub, at random cast,
 That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.

Far to the right, where Apennine ascends, 105
 Bright as the summer, Italy extends :
 Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
 Woods over woods in gay theatric pride ;
 While oft some temple's mouldering tops between
 With venerable grandeur mark the scene. 110

Could nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
 The sons of Italy were surely blest.
 Whatever fruits in different climes were found,
 That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground ;
 Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear, 115
 Whose bright succession decks the varied year ;
 Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
 With vernal lives, that blossom but to die ;
 These here disporting own the kindred soil,
 Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil ; 120
 While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand
 To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
 And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
 In florid beauty groves and fields appear, 125
 Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
 Contrasted faults through all his manners reign :
 Though poor, luxurious : though submissive, vain ;
 Though grave, yet trifling ; zealous, yet untrue ;
 And even in penance planning sins anew. 130
 All evils here contaminate the mind,
 That opulence departed leaves behind ;
 For wealth was theirs, not far removed the date,
 When commerce proudly flourished through the state ;
 At her command the palace learned to rise, 135
 Again the long-fallen column sought the skies,
 The canvas glowed, beyond e'en nature warm,
 The pregnant quarry teemed with human form ;
 Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
 Commerce on other shores displayed her sail ; 140
 While nought remained of all that riches gave,
 But towns unmanned and lords without a slave :
 And late the nation found with fruitless skill
 Its former strength was but plethoric ill.

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied 145
 By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride :
 From these the feeble heart and long-fallen mind
 An easy compensation seem to find.
 Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp arrayed,
 The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade : 150
 Processions formed for piety and love,
 A mistress or a saint in every grove :
 By sports like these are all their cares beguiled ;
 The sports of children satisfy the child ;
 Each nobler aim, repress by long control, 155
 Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul ;
 While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
 In happier meanness occupy the mind :
 As in those domes, where Cæsars once bore sway,
 Defaced by time and tottering in decay, 160
 There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
 The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed ;
 And, wondering man could want the larger pile,
 Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.

My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey 165
 Where rougher climes a nobler race display,
 Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansion tread,
 And force a churlish soil for scanty bread ;
 No product here the barren hills afford
 But man and steel, the soldier and his sword ; 170
 No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
 But winter lingering chills the lap of May ;
 No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,
 But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.

Yet still, even here, content can spread a charm, 175
 Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
 Though poor the peasant's hut, his feast though small,
 He sees his little lot the lot of all ;
 Sees no contiguous palace rear its head,
 To shame the meanness of his humble shed ; 180
 No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,
 To make him loathe his vegetable meal ;
 But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
 Each wish contracting, fits him to the soil.

Cheerful at morn, he wakes from short repose, 185
 Breathes the keen air, and carols as he goes ;
 With patient angle trolls the finny deep ;
 Or drives his venturous ploughshare to the steep ;
 Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,
 And drags the struggling savage into day. 190
 At night returning, every labour sped,
 He sits him down the monarch of a shed ;
 Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
 His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze ;
 While his loved partner, boastful of her hoard, 195
 Displays her cleanly platter on the board :
 And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
 With many a tale repays the nightly bed.

Thus every good his native wilds impart
 Imprints the patriot passion on his heart ; 200
 And e'en those hills, that round his mansion rise,
 Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
 Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
 And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms ;
 And as a child, when scaring sounds molest, 205
 Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
 So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,
 But bind him to his native mountains more.

Such are the charms to barren states assigned ;
 Their wants but few, their wishes all confined. 210
 Yet let them only share the praises due,
 If few their wants, their pleasures are but few ;
 For every want that stimulates the breast
 Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.
 Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies, 215
 That first excites desires, and then supplies ;
 Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
 To fill the languid pause with finer joy ;
 Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
 Catch every nerve and vibrate through the frame. 220
 Their level life is but a smouldering fire,
 Unquenched by want, unfanned by strong desire ;
 Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
 On some high festival of once a year,

In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire, 225
 Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.
 But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow :
 Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low ;
 For, as refinement stops, from sire to son,
 Unaltered, unimproved, the manners run ; 230
 And love's and friendship's finely-pointed dart
 Fall, blunted, from each indurated heart.
 Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
 May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest ;
 But all the gentler morals, such as play 235
 Through life's more cultured walks, and charm the way,
 These, far dispersed, on timorous pinions fly,
 To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
 I turn ; and France displays her bright domain. 240
 Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
 Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please,
 How often have I led thy sportive choir,
 With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire !
 Where shading elms along the margin grew, 245
 And freshened from the wave the zephyr flew ;
 And haply, though my harsh touch faltering still,
 But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill ;
 Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
 And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour. 250
 Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days
 Have led their children through the mirthful maze,
 And the gay grandsire, skilled in gestic lore,
 Has frisked beneath the burden of threescore.

So blest a life these thoughtless realms display ; 255
 Thus idly busy rolls their world away.
 Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
 For honour forms the social temper here ;
 Honour, that praise which real merit gains,
 Or even imaginary worth obtains, 260
 Here passes current ; paid from hand to hand,
 It shifts in splendid traffic round the land :
 From courts to camps, to cottages it strays,
 And all are taught an avarice of praise ;

They please, are pleased, they give to get esteem, 265
Till, seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.

But while this softer heart their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies also room to rise ;
For praise too dearly loved, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought : 270
And the weak soul, within itself unblest,
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart ;
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace, 275
And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace ;
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year :
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause. 280

✱ To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosomed in the deep where Holland lies.
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land ;
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide, 285
Lift the tall *rampire's* artificial pride. [*rampart*]
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow,
Spreads its long arms amidst the watery roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore— 290
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile ;
The slow canal, the yellow blossomed vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain— 295
A new creation rescued from his reign.

Thus, while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain. 300
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
Are here displayed. Their much-loved wealth imparts
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts ;

But view them closer, craft and fraud appear, 305
 Even liberty itself is bartered here.
 At gold's superior charms all freedom flies ;
 The needy sell it, and the rich man buys :
 A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
 Here wretches seek dishonourable graves, 310
 And, calmly bent, to servitude conform,
 Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.

Heavens ! how unlike their Belgic sires of old—
 Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold,
 War in each breast, and freedom on each brow ; 315
 How much unlike the sons of Britain now !

Fired at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
 And flies where Britain courts the western spring ;
 Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,
 And brighter streams than famed Hydaspes glide. 320
 There, all around, the gentlest breezes stray ;
 There gentlest music melts on ev'ry spray ;
 Creation's mildest charms are there combined :
 Extremes are only in the master's mind.
 Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state, 325
 ✓ With daring aims irregularly great.
 Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
 I see the lords of human kind pass by,
 Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
 By forms unfashioned, fresh from nature's hand, 330
 Fierce in their native hardness of soul,
 True to imagined right, above control ;
 While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
 And learns to venerate himself as man.

Thine, freedom, thine the blessings pictured here, 335
 Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear ;
 Too blest, indeed, were such without alloy,
 But fostered e'en by freedom, ills annoy ;
 That independence Britons prize too high,
 Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie : 340
 The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
 All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown.
 Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
 Minds combat minds, repelling and repelled ;

Ferments arise, imprisoned factions roar, 345
 Repressed ambition struggles round her shore.
 Till, overwrought, the general system feels
 Its motions stopped, or frenzy fire the wheels.

Nor this the worst. As nature's ties decay,
 As duty, love, and honour fail to sway, 350
 Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
 Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.
 Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
 And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown;
 Till time may come, when, stripped of all her charms,
 The land of scholars, and the nurse of arms, 356
 Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
 Where kings have toiled, and poets wrote for fame,
 One sink of level avarice shall lie,
 And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonoured die. 360

Yet think not, thus when freedom's ills I state,
 I mean to flatter kings, or court the great.
 Ye powers of truth, that bid my soul aspire,
 Far from my bosom drive the low desire!
 And thou, fair freedom, taught alike to feel 365
 The rabble's rage, and tyrant's angry steel;
 Thou transitory flower, alike undone
 By proud contempt, or favour's fostering sun,
 Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure!
 I only would repress them to secure; 370
 For just experience tells in ev'ry soil,
 That those who think must govern those that toil;
 And all that freedom's highest aims can reach
 Is but to lay proportioned loads on each.
 Hence, should one order disproportioned grow, 375
 Its double weight must ruin all below.

O then how blind to all that truth requires,
 Who think it freedom when a part aspires!
 Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,
 Except when fast approaching danger warms; 380
 But, when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
 Contracting regal power to stretch their own,
 When I behold a factious band agree
 To call it freedom when themselves are free;

Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw, 385
 Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law;
 The wealth of climes, where savage nations roam,
 Pillaged from slaves to purchase slaves at home;
 Fear, pity, justice, indignation start,
 Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart; 390
 Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
 I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

Yes, brother! curse with me that baleful hour
 When first ambition struck at regal power;
 And, thus polluting honour in its source, 395
 Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force.
 Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,
 Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore?
 Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
 Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste? 400
 Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
 Lead stern depopulation in her train,
 And over fields where scattered hamlets rose,
 In barren solitary pomp repose?
 Have we not seen, at pleasure's lordly call, 405
 The smiling, long-frequented village fall?
 Beheld the duteous son, the sire decayed,
 The modest matron, and the blushing maid,
 Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,
 To traverse climes beyond the western main; 410
 Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,
 And Niagara stuns with thundering sound?

Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays
 Through tangled forests and through dang'rous ways,
 Where beasts with man divided empire claim, 415
 And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim;
 There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
 And all around distressful yells arise,
 The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
 To stop too fearful, and too faint to go, 420
 Casts a long look where England's glories shine,
 And bids his bosom sympathise with mine.

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
 That bliss which only centres in the mind.

Why have I strayed from pleasure and repose, 425
To seek a good each government bestows?

In every government, though terrors reign,

Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,

+ How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure! + 430

Still to ourselves in every place consigned,

Our own felicity we make or find.

With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,

Glides the smooth current of domestic joy ;

The lifted axe, the agonising wheel, 435

Luke's iron crown, and Damiens' bed of steel,

To men remote from power but rarely known,

Leave reason, faith, and conscience, all our own.

Handwritten note: 2 lines

Handwritten note: 1 line

+ combined with the 2 lines

1 line

2 lines

1 line

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

DEAR SIR,

I CAN have no expectations in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to inquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarce make any other answer, than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege, and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those miseries real, which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an inquiry whether the country be depopulating or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the

reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries ; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages ; and all the wisdom of antiquity, in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.

I am, dear Sir,

Your sincere friend, and ardent admirer,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS poem was first published in May, 1770, in quarto form, at the cost of two shillings. Five more editions were required during that year. Goldsmith's name was at that time familiar to all. *The Traveller* had been published in 1765, and *The Vicar of Wakefield* soon afterwards; but he was still chiefly the poet of the people, as Handel, on Goldsmith's arrival in London, was the musician of the people. The court and the world of fashion gave but scant praise and less profit to either; but the heart of the people was true to both. One Whitehead was at this time Poet Laureate; but Beattie stood even higher in the estimation of the fashionable world. Hence Goldsmith wrote for the people, and *The Deserted Village* has been what it was intended to be, a popular poem.

This fact will partly account for the subject of the poem. It was one with which every one could sympathise. The contrast of the luxury and selfishness of the *nouveaux riches* with the simplicity and innocence of the kindly countryfolk is a theme that will always carry with it the feelings of hearer or of reader; but other causes for its choice may also be assigned. The fashion of the age inclined poets to sentimental reflection. One poet gives us an *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* and a *Hymn to Adversity*; another gives *Odes on the Passions and on Liberty*; a third analyses the *Pleasures of Imagination*; and a fourth, under the forbidding title of *Night Thoughts*, gives forth Meditations on Immortality, Life, Death, and a host of kindred topics. And not only would the subject of *The Deserted Village* be dictated by the general tendency of the age, but also by the poet's own character. The kindness and ready sympathy which were his pro-

minent characteristics would have full play in dealing with such questions; and lastly, for Goldsmith to treat a subject well, it was imperative that it should fall within the range of his personal observation. He had used up his foreign experiences in his first great poem; what then so natural as to combine his early recollections of village life with the later impressions gathered during his country excursions in England?

But, as Goldsmith says in the Dedication of the poem to Sir Joshua Reynolds, he had two main objects in view—to write an elegy over the expiring race of peasantry, and to inveigh against the increase of luxury. He was partly wrong, and partly right. There was no depopulation going on in the country; and if there had been, the increase of trade could not possibly have caused it. But when he attacks luxury—not confusing it, as he sometimes does, with commerce—he has not only the sympathy of our feelings, but the assent of our reason; while when he laments that “one only master grasps the whole domain,” we feel that he is touching a question which may have yet to be settled in our own day.

This double anxiety to make the most of his own experience, and also to inculcate an important moral by a powerful picture, has led him to exaggerate the contrast between the smiling plenty of the happy hamlet on the one side, and on the other, the misery of the evicted peasant, and consequent desolation of the homestead. Goldsmith, in blending together his Irish recollections and English experiences, has allowed his wish to produce a striking effect to carry him beyond the bounds of consistency. The happiness is essentially English, the eviction purely Irish. No such radiant prosperity was ever seen in Connaught; no such wholesale emigration ever known in Surrey. This inconsistency gives an air of unreality to the poem as a whole, which the close fidelity of individual portions fails entirely to remove.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

SWEET AUBURN ! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed :
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease, 5
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene !
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm, 10
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made !
How often have I blessed the coming day, 15
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed ; 20
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round :
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired ;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown 25
By holding out to tire each other down ;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place ;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove. 30
These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please ;

These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed ;
 These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled. ✕

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn, 35
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
 And desolation saddens all thy green :
 One only master grasps the whole domain,
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40
 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
 But choked with sedges, works its weary way ;
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
 The hollow-sounding *bittern* guards its nest ; ✕
 Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies, 45
 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
 Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
 And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;
 And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
 Far, far away, thy children leave the land. — 50

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride, 55
 When once destroyed, can never be supplied. ✕

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
 When every rood of ground maintained its man ;
 For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
 Just gave what life required, but gave no more : 60
 His best companion, innocence and health,
 And his best riches ignorance of wealth. ✕

But times are altered ; trade's unfeeling train
 Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain :
 Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose, 65
 Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose ;
 And every want to luxury allied,
 And every pang that folly pays to pride, ✕
 Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
 Those calm desires that asked but little room, 70

Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
 Lived in each look, and brightened all the green ;
 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour, 75
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
 Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
 Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
 And, many a year elapsed, return to view
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wand'rings round this world of care,
 In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
 I still had hopes my latest hours to crown, 85
 Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;
 To husband out life's taper at the close,
 And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
 Amidst the swains to shew my book-learned skill, 90
 Around my fire an evening group to draw,
 And tell of all I felt and all I saw ;
 And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
 Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
 I still had hopes, my long vexations past, 95
 Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
 Retreats from care that never must be mine,
 How blest is he who crowns, in shades like these,
 A youth of labour with an age of ease ; 100
 Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !
 For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
 Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ;
 No surly porter stands, in guilty state, 105
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend ;
 Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
 While resignation gently slopes the way ; 110

And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past !†

1 Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose ;
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow, 115
The mingling notes came softened from below ;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young ;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school ; 120
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail, 125
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the blooming flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring ; 130
She, wretched matron—forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn—
She only left of all the harmless train, 135
The sad historian of the pensive plain !

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild ;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose. X 140
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place ;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power, 145
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour,
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain ; 150

The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
 Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
 The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
 Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay, 155
 Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,
 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
 Shouldered his crutch and shewed how fields were won.
 Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160
 Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
 His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
 And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side;
 But in his duty, prompt at every call, 165
 He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
 And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
 To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
 He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
 Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
 And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,
 The reverend champion stood. At his control
 Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
 Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise, 175
 And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
 His looks adorned the venerable place;
 Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
 And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray. 180
 The service past, around the pious man,
 With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
 E'en children followed, with endearing wile,
 And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile:
 His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed, 185
 Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed;
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
 As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190

Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Besides yon straggling fence that skirts the way
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay—
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule, 195
The village master taught his little school; †
A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disaster in his morning face; 200
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught, 205
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge. 210
† In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For e'en though vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thund'ring sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around,
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew 215
That one small head should carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot,
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot. †
Near yonder thorn that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace 225
The parlour-splendours of that festive place;
The white-washed wall, the nicely-sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day; 230

The pictures placed for ornament and use,
 The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose ;
 The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
 With aspen boughs, and flowers and fennel gay ;
 While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show, 235
 Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row. X

X Vain transitory splendours ! could not all
 Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall ?
 Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
 An hour's importance to the poor man's heart ; 240
 Thither no more the peasant shall repair
 To sweet oblivion of his daily care ;
 No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
 No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail ;
 No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear, 245
 Relax his ponderous strength and lean to hear ;
 The host himself no longer shall be found
 Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;
 Nor the coy maid, half willing to be pressed,
 Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
 These simple blessings of the lowly train,
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art ; 255
 Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
 The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway :
 Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
 Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined. 260
 But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
 With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,
 In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
 The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;
 And, even while fashion's brightest hearts decoy,
 The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy ?

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey 265
 The rich man's power increase, the poor's decay,
 'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
 Between a splendid and a happy land.
 Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
 And shouting Folly hails them from her shore ; 270

Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,
 And rich men flock from all the world around.
 Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
 That leaves our useful products still the same.
 Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride 275
 Takes up a place that many poor supplied;
 Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
 Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
 The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
 Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth;
 His seat where solitary spots are seen, 281
 Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
 Around the world each needful product flies,
 For all the luxuries the world supplies:
 While thus the land, adorned for pleasure, all 285
 In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorned and plain,
 Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
 Slight every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
 Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes; 290
 But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
 When time advances, and when lovers fail,
 She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
 In all the glaring impotence of dress. |
 Thus fares the land, by luxury betrayed: 295
 In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,
 But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
 While, scourged by famine, from the smiling land
 The mournful peasant leads his humble band; 300
 And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
 The country blooms—a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
 To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
 If to some common's fenceless limits strayed 305
 He drives his flocks to pick the scanty blade,
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
 And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.

* If to the city sped—what waits him there?
 To see profusion that he must not share; 310

To see ten thousand baneful hearts combined
 To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
 To see each joy the sons of pleasure know,
 Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe;
 Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade, 315
 There, the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
 Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
 There, the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
 The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign,
 Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous train; 320
 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy;
 Sure these denote one universal joy!
 Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah! turn thine eyes
 Where the poor houseless shivering female lies. 326
 She once, perhaps, in village plenty blessed,
 Has wept at tales of innocence distressed;
 Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
 Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn; 330
 Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
 Near her betrayer's door she lays her head—
 And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
 With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
 When idly first, ambitious of the town, 335
 She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn! thine the loveliest train,
 Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
 E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
 At proud men's doors they ask a little bread. 340

Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
 Where half the convex world intrudes between,
 Through torrid tracks with fainting steps they go,
 Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
 Far different there from all that charmed before, 345
 The various terrors of that horrid shore;
 Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
 And fiercely shed intolerable day;
 Those matted woods where birds forget to sing;
 But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling; 350

Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
 Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
 Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
 The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
 Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey, 355
 And savage men more murderous still than they;
 While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
 Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
 Far different these from every former scene,
 The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360
 The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
 That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day,
 That called them from their native walks away;
 When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 365
 Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last—
 And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
 For seats like these beyond the western main—
 And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,
 Returned and wept, and still returned to weep. 370
 The good old sire, the first prepared to go
 To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
 But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
 He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
 His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears, 375
 The fond companion of his helpless years,
 Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
 And left a lover's for a father's arms.
 With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
 And blessed the cot where every pleasure rose, 380
 And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
 And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
 In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree, 385
 How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
 How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
 Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
 Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
 Boast of a florid vigour not their own: 390

At every draught more large and large they grow,
 A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe ;
 Till, sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
 Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun, 395
 And half the business of destruction done ;
 Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
 I see the rural virtues leave the land.
 Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail
 That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400
 Downward they move, a melancholy band,
 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
 Contented toil, and hospitable care,
 And kind connubial tenderness are there,
 And piety with wishes placed above, 405
 And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ;
 Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,
 To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame : 410
 Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;
 Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
 Thou found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ; 415
 Thou guide, by which the noble arts excel,
 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !
 Farewell ; and oh ! where'er thy voice be tried,
 On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
 Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420
 Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
 Redress the rigours of the inclement clime ;
 Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain ;
 Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain ;
 Teach him, that states of native strength possessed, 425
 Though very poor, may still be very blest ;
 That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
 As ocean sweeps the laboured mole away ;
 While self-dependent power can time defy,
 As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 430

W. H. Young

48

NOTES

THE TRAVELLER.

The Argument.

(1-10) The poet assures his brother, to whom he dedicates the poem, of his affection for him, an affection that no distance can efface, no variety weaken ; and (11-22) invokes blessings on his quiet, hospitable home. (23-30) Far different is the lot of the wandering poet, who after long journeyings (31-36) takes his place on some Alpine height, and moralizes on the scene below, (37-50) in the spirit not of an unsympathetic or cynical philosopher, but of an open-hearted philanthropist, (51-58) and with feelings as mixed as those of the miser counting his gold—with satisfaction with what has been gained, sorrow that so much is absent.

(58-62) The poet longs to find some abode of perfect happiness on earth. (62-80) Esquimaux and negro, in fact all patriots, claim it for their own country, and for equally good reasons ; (81-98) for everywhere life may be sustained, everywhere the blessings of civilization are counteracted by disadvantages.

(99-104) Let us prove this by induction. (105-110) Take : I. Italy, its natural beauty, (111-122) and luxuriant fertility. (122-144) But the character of the people is a compound of all the faults that the prosperity and subsequent collapse of commerce could produce, (145-164) with just enough artistic taste to cripple nobler energies. (165-175) II. Switzerland. Though the soil is barren, and the climate severe, (175-198) yet, as all are poor, all are contented. The life has its own homely joys ; (199-208) so that the Swiss loves his country the more for its lack of natural advantages. (209-226) But this rough life incapacitates him for the enjoyment of the more refined forms of pleasure, (227-238) or for the practice of the gentler virtues. (239-254) III. France. The people are of a happy disposition, (255-266) every man eager to gain the good opinion of the circle in which he moves ; (267-280) but this naturally results in a

want of independence, and in an ostentatious sham. (281-296) IV. Holland. The very nature of the country, rescued with difficulty from the ocean, (297-300) inculcates industry and thrift; (301-312) but a universal venality is the natural accompaniment of these qualities. (313-316) A sad degeneration! (317-334) V. Britain. The country favoured by nature, the inhabitants free, independent, high-spirited, 'the lords of human kind.' (335-348) But independence begets disunion, political and social; (349-360) and repressive measures develop the coarser forces of society at the expense of the finer, so as to threaten national degeneracy.

(361-376) The evils of freedom should be plainly stated, and its true nature settled to be a proportionate adjustment of the burdens of society, (377-392) and not the ascendancy of any one class; *e.g.* of an aristocratic clique which defies the crown; (392-422) for as loyalty decreases, the predominance of wealth increases, and the rich man drives the poor to exile on a distant and perilous shore.

(423-438) But the search for perfect government is at once futile and unimportant; for governments affect but very slightly the happiness of individuals.

1 Remote. More commonly used of places than of persons. Cf. l. 437.

Melancholy. (Gr. μέλας, black, and χολή, bile). One of a large family of words; *e.g.* 'humour,' 'humourous,' 'choleric,' 'sanguine,' &c., which have their origin in an old theory of medicine, "according to which there were four principal moistures or 'humours' in the natural body, on the due proportion and combination of which the disposition alike of body and of mind depended." Cf. Trench, *Study of Words*, lect. iii.

Slow. "'Chamier,' said Johnson, 'once asked me what he (Goldsmith) meant by *slow*, the last word in the first line of *The Traveller*. Did he mean tardiness of locomotion?' Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered, 'Yes.' I was sitting by, and said, 'No, sir; you do not mean tardiness of locomotion. You mean that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude.' Chamier believed I had written the line as much as if he had seen me write it."—BOSWELL, *Life of Johnson*.

2 Lazy Scheld. A river in the N. of France and W. of Belgium, flowing by Tournay, Oudenarde, Ghent, Antwerp.

Wandering Po. A river in the N. of Italy, rising in the Alps, passing by Turin, Piacenza, Cremona, and emptying itself by many mouths into the Adriatic.

3 Carinthian. Carinthia, a province of the Austrian Empire between Illyria and Styria, visited by Goldsmith in 1755.

Boor. A word adopted from the Dutch 'boer,' literally 'a husbandman,' akin to Ger. 'bauen,' 'to till.' For the degradation of meaning cf. 'knave,' 'varlet,' 'pagan,' 'villain,' &c.

5 *Campania.* A province of Central Italy, bounded on the north by Latium, and on the south by Lucania: celebrated in classical times for its extraordinary fertility.

Forsaken. In spite of the contrast between the past and present condition of some of its towns (e.g. Capua), it is still one of the most populous provinces of Italy.

7 *Realm.* Through Old Fr. 'realme,' from a late Lat. form 'regalimen.'

8 *Untravelled.* Cf. the address of a lover to his mistress in Ford's well-known madrigal—

"Where beauty moves, and wit delights,
And signs of kindness bind me;
There, oh, there, where'er I go,
I leave my heart behind me."

10 *And drags at,* &c. Goldsmith often repeats his images. So (*vide* Aldine edition) "The farther I travel I feel the pain of separation with stronger force. Those ties that bind me to my native country and you are still unbroken; by every remove I only drag a greater length of chain."

—*Citizen of the World*, vol. i. lett. iii.

11 *Crown.* Optative = 'may eternal blessings crown.'

15 *Want and pain.* Abstract for concrete. Cf. l. 77.

Repair. This neuter verb, 'to go to,' differs in derivation as well as in meaning from the active verb meaning 'to mend or restore.' This is from Fr. 'repairer,' from late Lat. 'repatriare,' literally 'to re-visit one's native country,' while that is from Lat. 'reparare,' literally to 'prepare again.'

17 *Crowned.* This metaphorical use is common in all periods; e.g.

"This grief is crowned with consolation."

—SHAKESPEARE, *Antony and Cleop.*

"Crown a happy life with a fair death."

—TENNYSON, *Enid*.

18 *Ruddy;* i.e. the hue of health.

19 *Fests.* Originally a deed or exploit; Lat. 'gestum,' from 'gero,' 'to do.' Hence in mediæval language the narration of anything interesting or amusing.

Prank. 'A trick,' an old word, though of doubtful derivation, perhaps from Welsh 'pranc,' a frolic, or akin to Dutch 'pronk,' 'ostentation,' 'finery,' and probably to 'prance.'

22 *Luxury,* &c. Cf. Rogers' *Pleasures of Memory*—"This truth once known, to bless is to be blest."

23 *'Me.'* This objective case is governed by 'leads' in l. 29.

24 *My prime*, &c. An absolute clause explanatory of l. 22.

In wandering spent and care. Not an uncommon variation of the natural order of the words. Cf. Waller's *Ode to the Lord Protector*—"Justice to crave, and succour, at your court."

26 *Fleeting*. Probably akin to the substantive 'fleet,' so originally 'floating swiftly away.' Cf. also adjective 'fleet,' substantive 'fleetness.'

That mocks me, &c. Man's prospects of happiness have often been compared to a mirage.

27 *The circle*; i.e. the horizon (τὸ ὄριζον) or boundary line.

28 *Allures*; i.e. as being apparently near.

32 *Sit me down*. Many verbs now used intransitively were once reflexive; so 'I repent me,' 'I fear me.' Notice that poetry preserves archaic forms.

33 *Placed on high above*, &c. That such a position may be often literally true, is the experience of all who have explored the higher mountains. Cf. of the Alps in Rogers's *Pleasures of Memory*—

"Though far below the forked lightnings play,
And at his feet the thunder dies away."

Career. 'The course which the storm takes,' literally a 'road for a car,' from Fr. 'carrière.'

35 *Lakes*, &c. These substantives are added to explain and are in opposition to 'a hundred realms.'

36 *Pomp*. Used in a sense very far removed from its original one of 'sending,' from Gr. πέμπω (Cf. *D. V.* l. 66, 259), and = 'pride' in this line, 'that which gives rise to feelings of pride.'

38 *Store*; i.e. abundance. Derived from Lat. 'instaurō,' 'to renew,' through Old Fr. 'estoire.'

40 *Vain*. The poet does not use this condemnatory epithet, but puts it in the mouth of the philosopher. But the poet here mistakes the true spirit of philosophy, which echoes rather the cry of the slave-dramatist Terence, "Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto."

41 *School-taught*; i.e. taught in the schools of philosophy. All mediæval philosophers were roughly classed as 'school-men,' and their philosophy was termed 'scholastic.' Cf. Pope's *Epistle to Arbuthnot*—"Unlearned, he knew no schoolman's subtle art." And on scholasticism cf. Hallam's *Middle Ages*, part ii. chap. ix.

Dissemble. From Lat. 'dissimulare,' 'to disguise or conceal.'

42 *These little things*; i.e. those which 'make each humbler bosom vain.'

43 *Wiser*; i.e. than philosopher or schoolman.

Sympathetic. 'Sympathy,' from Gk. σύν, 'together,' πάθος, 'feeling.' So identical in meaning with 'com-passion' or 'fellow-feeling.'

45 *Crowned*. This repetition of one word (as in lines 11, 17) is characteristic of Goldsmith. Cf. 'realms' in lines 7, 29, 34, and 'stranger' in lines 16, 21, and 'bend' in 48, 52.

47 *Busy*; i.e. 'restless.'

48 *Bending*; i.e. 'stooping to their work.'

Dress. Lit. 'to make straight.' So 'to put or keep in order,' 'to deck.' From Lat. 'dirigere.' So 'a vine-dresser.'

49 *Tributary*; i.e. 'all contributing to form one pleasing whole.'

50 *Creation's heir*. Cf. Cowper's *Task*. *The Winter Morning*, l. 738-741—

"He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature; and though poor, perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own."

Read the whole passage.

51 *Store*. How far is its meaning in this line different from its sense in l. 38?

52 *Recounts*. In its literal sense, 'counts again.'

54 *Yet still he sighs*. The insatiability of misers has been a common-place in all ages. "Crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit."—JUVENAL. "Multa petentibus desunt multa."—HORACE. Cf. Lord Lytton's *My Novel*, bk. x.—"Philus," saith a Latin writer, "was not so rich as Lælius; Lælius was not so rich as Scipio; Scipio was not so rich as Crassus; and Crassus was not so rich as he wished to be."

56 *Pleased*. This agrees with the personal pronoun implied in the word 'my' in the line before.

57 *Prevails*. In the literal sense, 'gets the mastery.'

Sorrows fall. It seems more natural to make this phrase mean, 'sorrows fall upon or oppress the heart,' than to wrest 'sorrows' into meaning 'tears of sorrow.'

60 *Consigned*. 'Assigned' or 'appropriated.'

63 *To find*. Dependent on 'direct,' in l. 64.

65 *Frigid zone*. Gk. ζώνη, a girdle or belt. Geographers have divided the earth into five great divisions: the torrid zone, situated between the tropics; the two temperate zones; and the two frigid zones, enclosed within the polar circles.

68 *Long nights*. In the most northern parts of Lapland the sun remains below the horizon from November 20th to January 10th.

69 *The line*; i.e. the equator, an imaginary line dividing the earth into the northern and southern hemispheres.

70 *Golden sands*. The Gold Coast.

Palmy wine. This is made from the sap of the Palmyra palm, the cocoa-nut palm, and many other species.

71 *Glare*. The hot, bright sunlight. The word is akin to 'clear,' and Lat. 'clarus.'

72 *Gave*. 'Have given' would have been the more natural termination of the clause, if the sequence of tenses was followed out; but Goldsmith was often not too particular. Cf. l. 113, and *Deserted Village*, l. 92.

73, 74 For such boasts, and the moral naturally drawn from them, see Longfellow's ballad, *The Happiest Land*, translated from the German.

77 *Wisdom*. Cf. l. 15.

79 *Good*; i.e. advantages.

81 *Nature, a mother*. Turn the metaphor into a simile.

83 *Peasant*. 'One who lives in the country (as opposed to the town).' Derived from Fr. 'paysan,' from 'pays,' 'country.' Lat. 'pagus,' a 'village' or 'district' (whence 'pagan').

84 *Idra's cliff*. Idra, or more properly Idria, is in Carniola, a district of Illyria, situated partly on several low hills, partly at the bottom of a narrow valley surrounded by high mountains, on the banks of the little river Idria. It is famous for its quick-silver mines.

Arno. A river in Tuscany. What towns are on it?

Shelvy side; i.e. 'abounding in shelves, shoals, or shallows.'

85 *Rocky-crested*. A compound epithet = 'crested with rocks.'

Frown. A very common metaphor for the threatening aspect of cliffs, crags, &c. Cf. Byron's *Childe Harold*, canto iii.—

"The castled crag of Drachenfels

Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine."

This is called by Abbott a personal metaphor; a personal relation is transferred to an impersonal object.

86 *Rocks by custom*. The force of habit makes the rocks as comfortable as feather-beds. So Locke calls custom "a greater power than nature."

87 *Art*. Used, of course, in its wider sense, as in 'artificial,' not in 'artistic.'

88 *Content*. The usual substantive (as in l. 91) is contentment. But cf. note on *D. V.* l. 413, and—

"Nought's had, all's spent,

Where our desire is got without content."

—SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*, act iii. sc. 2.

89 *Strong*. Used for adverb 'strongly,' 'powerfully.' Cf. "The moon shines bright."

90 *Either*. Properly only one of two, and not, as here, one of five.

91 *Contentment fails*. Freedom being shared by the many; wealth by the few.

92 *Honour sinks*. The low tone of commercial morality is the unfailing subject of laments in every age.

93 *Prone*. 'Inclined,' literally 'bending forwards.' For the sentiment cf. Pope's *Essay on Man*, l. 131-2—

"And hence one Master Passion in the breast,
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest"—

with the thirty lines which follow.

96 *Spurns*. 'Rejects,' 'throws aside.' Cf. *D. V.* l. 106.

97 *Domain*. Here merely 'country,' usually 'an estate.' From Lat. 'dominium,' 'the estate' of, 'dominus,' 'the master' of, 'domus,' 'a house.' Another form of the word is 'demesne.'

98 *Peculiar pain*. Some evil specially arising from the excessive development of this characteristic. As every virtue carried to excess becomes a vice, so every pleasure over-stimulated becomes a pain. Cf. Gray's *Ode on the Pleasure of Vicissitude*—

"Still where rosy pleasure leads
See a kindred grief pursue."

101 *Proper*. As Lat. 'proprius,' Fr. 'propre,' 'peculiar to oneself,' 'personal.'

103 *Like yon neglected shrub*, &c. Such is the position of the melancholy traveller-poet, as he looks down from his Alpine solitudes.

105 *Apennines*. The general name for the great mountain system of Italy, divided into four sections, the Ligurian, Etruscan, Roman, and Neapolitan Apennines. The highest of them is Monte Corno, 9,521 feet.

108 *Woods over woods*. In apposition to 'uplands.'

Theatric. As in a theatre, a place for sights. From Gk. θεαδρμα, 'I view.' Cf. "Silvis scena coruscis."—VIRGIL, *Æn.* i. 164. Is it flattering to nature to compare her works with those of the scene-painter?

111 *Could*, &c. The praises of Italy have often been sung by poets. Cf. Virgil, *Georgic* ii. 136-176; Addison's *Letter from Italy*; or, as a longer description, Rogers' *Italy*, and especially Byron's *Childe Harold*, canto iv.

113 *Were found*. The present tense would be more natural. Cf. l. 72.

114 *Court the ground*. A natural metaphor for the creeping plant.

115 *Torrid*. Cf. on l. 65.

118 *Vernal lives*. 'Short as the spring-time.'

119 *Own*. 'Acknowledge,' like 'confess' in *D. V.* l. 76.

Kindred soil. Just the same metaphor as in 'congenial.'

120 *Ask*, &c. 'Require the planter's toil to produce luxuriant growth.'

121 *Gelid*. 'Cold,' 'cool,' scarcely naturalized in English (Lat. 'gelidus'). But (cf. Thomson's *Summer*, l. 205—"By

gelid founts and careless rills to muse") common enough in poetry of the last century.

122 *Winnow fragrance*. This figure sounds somewhat far-fetched. 'To scatter fragrance over the land, as the winnowing-machine scatters the chaff.' Cf. the use of the verb in Milton's *Par. Lost*, v. 269—"Then with quick fan winnows the buxom air."

123 *Sense*; *i.e.* 'the senses.'

125 *Florid*. 'With profusion of flowers.'

127 *Manners*. Used in a deeper sense than mere 'manners.'
Cf. Lat. 'mores.'

Cf. "And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power."

—WORDSWORTH, *Sonnet to Milton*.

129 *Zealous*; *i.e.* enthusiastic for religion. Cf. *Spectator*, No. 185—"I would have every zealous man examine his heart thoroughly, and I believe he will often find that what he calls a zeal for his religion is either pride, interest, or ill-nature."

131 *Contaminate*; *i.e.* 'corrupt by contagion.'

133 *Not far removed the date*; *i.e.* 'in comparatively recent times.'

Date. Literally 'the time when any document was given or issued.' Cf. the form used now in official papers—"Given at our court, &c., this 19th day," &c.

134 *Commerce*. Venice, Florence, Genoa, Pisa were the chief seats of Italian commerce, probably the wealthiest, certainly the most refined towns of Europe in the 15th century.

135 *Learned to rise*. Cf. l. 85. But the present hardly amounts to a personal metaphor; for 'learnt' = was taught, was made.

136 *Long-fallen*; *i.e.* since the days of Roman greatness.

137 *Canvas*. 'Hemp cloth' (from Lat. 'cannabis,' 'hemp'), specially used for painting. Cf. Addison's *Letter from Italy*—

"A nicer touch to the stretched canvas give,

Or teach their animated rocks to live."

And sails. Cf. Waller's *Ode to the King on his Navy*—

"Where'er thy navy spreads her canvas wings

Homage to thee, and peace to all she brings."

Beyond e'en nature warm. A phrase applicable most closely perhaps to Titian (Tiziano Vecellio, a Venetian, born in 1477), of all the great Italian painters.

138 *The pregnant*, &c. Cf. Rogers's *Pleasures of Memory*—

"Who from the quarried mass, like Phidias, drew

Forms ever fair, creations ever new."

But the phrase is here far fetched, for the quarry teems with human form; *i.e.* contains statues *in posse*, as much at one time as another.

139 *Southern gale*. Why southern? Perhaps because the south wind brings storms, and hence is considered as gusty or fitful.

140 *On other shores*. Chiefly owing to the spread of maritime discovery, which opened new channels for trade.

142 *Unmanned*. In the literal sense of 'depopulated,' very rarely so used, except of ships. What is the usual sense?

143 *Skill*. Used in the archaic sense of knowledge. So the verb, "All that could skill of instruments of music."—2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 12.

144 *Plethoric*. 'Plethora' is a medical word, 'overfulness of blood' (from Gr. *πληθύνω*, 'to be full'). So 'plethoric' here means 'overgrown or overfull to an extent that produced an unhealthy state.' For a description of this cf. *The Deserted Village*, l. 389-394.

147 *Long-fallen*. Notice the repetition of this epithet from l. 136.

150 *Pasteboard triumph*. This probably is an allusion to the drolleries of the Carnival. For instance, at Rome "the carriages and horses are decked out in a very fine or a very capricious manner." Thus a "coachman, dressed as a Spanish cavalier of the olden times, is driving an old Tabellone, or notary, with a huge wine-flask (extended towards a Punch on stilts), and a Roman doctor, with 'spectacles on nose,' while a small-grown Punch climbs up the side-steps, and a full-grown Punchinello, with a squeaking trumpet to his lips, and a sturdy, turbaned Moor act as footmen." Or again at Naples, large cars are decked out as ships, and drawn up the Toledo by six horses or oxen, manned with sham sailors, who furl or unfurl the sails, or discharge larboard and starboard volleys of sugar-plums. Cf. MacFarlane's *Popular Customs of the South of Italy*.

Cavalcade. This may refer to the races of riderless horses in the Corso at Rome at the time of the Carnival. The animals are spurred on by leaden balls with steel spikes attached to their girths; and no less a personage than the governor of Rome was the judge of the race. Or perhaps the allusion is to pageantry got up in imitation of a mediæval hunting party, or some similar scene.

154 *The sports of children*, &c. Who does not know the charming story of Sir Joshua Reynolds surprising Goldsmith engaged in teaching his dog to beg, while on his desk beside him was lying the unfinished MS. of the *Traveller*, the ink of this line still wet?

156 *Mans*. Carries on the metaphor of a vessel.

159 *Domes*. 'Palaces.' Cf. *D. V.* l. 319. Often used for any high and spacious hall; and not in its commoner, though narrower, sense of a hemispherical structure raised above the roof of a building. Thompson uses the word similarly for the nests of birds (*Spring*), hives of bees (*Autumn*), &c.

162 *Shelter-seeking*. This epithet is inserted to bring the simple object of the peasant into prominence.

165 *My soul, turn, &c.* In all this description of Switzerland, there is no conception of its beauty, which now attracts to it millions of admirers every year. The love of wildness in nature has grown up since Goldsmith's time. He was himself one of the few Saxons who had then ventured to explore the Highlands; but, disgusted by the hideous wilderness, he declared that he greatly preferred Holland. Scotland "presented a dismal landscape;" "hills and rocks intercepted every prospect;" how great a contrast to the country round Leyden; "nothing can equal the beauty" of the latter, with its "fine houses, elegant gardens, statues, grottos, vistas." Cf. Macaulay's *History of England*, ch. xiii.

167 *Bleak Swiss*. An epithet oftener applied to places than to persons, originally meaning 'pale,' rather than 'exposed,' 'unsheltered.' It is akin to the verb 'to bleach.'

Mansion. Cf. *D. V.* l. 140. Here rather 'an abiding-place,' 'a home,' as a district, than 'a house.'

168 *Force the soil*. 'Extract the scanty produce from it not without great difficulty and labour.'

Churlish. 'Ill-natured,' 'surly;' but not seldom applied to things; e.g. "Spain found the war so churlish and longsome."—BACON. "In Essex they have a very churlish blue clay."—MORTIMER, *Husbandry*. Originally a churl meant merely 'a country fellow.' A.S. 'ceorl.' Cf. Scotch 'carle.'

170 *Soldier and his sword*. The monument at Lucerne, by Thorwaldsen, commemorates the most famous exploit of the Swiss as mercenaries.

171 *Torpid*. 'Inactive,' 'incapable of the exertion of producing anything.' So Lat. 'torpentes gelu.'

Array. Derived from Fr. 'arroi,' which is either a hybrid word from 'ad' and Teutonic 'rât,' 'counsel,' 'help;' or from Low Lat. 'arraia,' from Ger. 'reihe,' a 'row.' But had Goldsmith never seen or heard of gentians and Alpine roses?

173 *Zephyr*. Soft west wind.

Sues. (Fr. 'suivre,' 'to follow,' Lat. 'sequor.') Phrases which speak of the wind 'wooing' or 'kissing' are perhaps more common than this; but the metaphor is the same.

174 *Meteor*. Properly 'anything suspended above us' (from Gr. *μετέωρος*), 'any atmospheric phenomenon,' not necessarily fiery or bright; e.g. with Aristotle dew is a meteor.

Invest. Here in its literal sense, 'to cover up with a dress.' (Lat. 'vestis,' 'a robe.')

176 *Redress the clime*. Cf. l. 214.

179 *Contiguous*. 'Touching,' 'adjoining,' from Lat. 'contingo' ('con,' 'tango,' 'I touch'). Cf. *D. V.* l. 179.

Palace. From the Palatine, one of the Seven Hills of Rome, on which Augustus had his residence.

181 *Banquet.* From Fr. 'banquet,' Italian 'banchetto,' 'a little bench' or 'table,' diminutive of 'banco,' originally from an Old High German word 'banc.'

183 *Calm.* Especially as being free from envy and avarice.

184 *Each wish.* Objective case after the participle 'contracting,' which agrees with the nominative to 'fits.' "By narrowing his wants, and limiting his desires, he suits himself to his country." Cf. l. 382. Cf. Horace—"Contracta melius parva cupidine Vectigalia porriges," &c.

186 *Carols.* 'Sings,' from Fr. 'carole,' Italian 'carola.'

187 *Angle.* Now more commonly used as a verb. But cf. Shakespeare's *Ant. and Cleop.* act. ii. sc. 5—"Give me mine angle; we'll to the river." The angle was properly the hook (Cf. 'angle' as meaning 'a corner'), but used for rod, line, and hook together.

Trolls. Akin to the words 'roll,' 'drill,' &c., properly applied to the rotatory motion, as the line passes over the reel. Cf. 'to troll a catch or round,' a piece of music in which the same air is passed round to each singer in succession.

'*Trolls the deep.*' It is rather a forced construction, as the line, if anything, is that which is trolled.

Finny deep. It seems a violent figure of speech to transfer the epithet from the fish to the sea. Would 'the antlered forest' or 'the feathered grove' be equally admissible? Cf. however 'the warbling grove,' *Deserted Village*, l. 361.

188 *Venturous.* 'Adventurous' is the more usual form.

Ploughshare. The portion of the plough which divides the soil. Connect together 'shear,' 'share,' 'shire,' 'sheer,' 'shore,' 'shred,' 'sherd,' 'short;' and give any other words of the same family. Cf. Trench, *Study of Words*, lect. vi.

Steep; i.e. 'up the steep hill-side.'

190 *Savage.* The bear. Rarely used as a substantive except of human beings. Literally 'an inhabitant of the woods.' From Fr. 'sauvage,' Italian 'selvaggio,' Lat. 'silvaticus,' from 'silva,' a wood. For this sense cf. Pope's *Iliad*, xviii. 373, of a lion—

"When the grim savage, to his rifled den

Too late returning, snuffs the track of men."

191 *Sped.* Participle of 'to speed;' here 'accomplished successfully,' without any notion of quickness, just as in the proverb, "More haste, worse speed."

192 *Sits him down.* For this use of 'him' cf. l. 32.

193 *Smiles by his cheerful,* &c. Quote a parallel passage from Gray's *Elegy*.

196 *Platter.* Collect and connect as many words as possible which are etymologically allied to this.

197 *Haply*. Adverb formed from the substantive 'hap' = 'chance.'

Pilgrim. Literally 'a man who goes through countries.' (Lat. 'per,' 'ager.' So 'peregrinus,' and Italian 'peregrino,' 'pellegrino,' and Fr. 'pelerin.')

198 *Nightly*. 'For the night;' not, as usually, 'for a succession of nights.'

200 *Patriot*. Used, as often, for an adjective. Cf. l. 357.

202 *Enhance*. 'Heighten.' Derivation from Lat. 'ante,' 'before.' So 'en avant,' 'forwards;' thence was formed Provençal 'enansar,' 'to advance.'

203 *Conforms*. 'Suits itself.'

205 *Scaring*. 'To scare' is properly 'to drive away by frightening,' as in the phrase 'scare-crow.' So 'to frighten' generally.

211 *Share*. Not used very accurately. They obtain all, and not a mere share of the praises that are really due.

213 *Stimulates*. From Lat. 'stimulus,' 'a goad.' 'Spurs or goads it on.' Their pleasures are as few as their wants, as they are merely the satisfaction of those wants. Cf. the ancient definition of ἡδονή as ἀναπλήρωσις τῆς ἐνδείας.

215 *Whence* = 'consequently.' The mind is too sluggish to allow new desires to be created in it.

217 *Cloy*. 'To glut,' 'sate.' Probably akin to 'clog.'

218 *To fill*. This infinitive is the subject to 'is unknown.' What would be the prose construction?

Languid pause. The natural reaction after sensual excess.

220 Notice the confusion of metaphors. Expand them into similes.

221 *Level*. 'Even,' 'unvaried,' 'monotonous.' Cf. l. 359.

Smouldering. Burning very slowly, producing more dust than flame. Some copies read 'mouldering.'

224 *Of once a year*. 'Of' gives an adjectival force to the phrase (cf. 'of gold' = 'golden'); 'once' is treated as a substantive, governed by 'of.' Cf. 'A child of one year old.'

226 *Debauch*. A metaphor from masonry; literally 'a deviation from the straight line.' (From 'de' and Old Fr. 'bauche,' 'a row of bricks.')

Expire. Observe the mood.

227 *Alone*. This use of the word, though common, is scarcely correct. 'Not only their joys.'

231 *Dart*. The dart or shaft of love is a very common metaphor, which Molière laughed at, and which is now confined to valentines and crackers. It is very naturally transferred to friendship.

232 *Indurated*. Hardened (from Lat. 'durus,' 'hard'). 'Obdurate' is perhaps a more common compound.

Fall. The plural cannot be grammatically correct, though the construction is easily explained.

Cf. "Grief, mixed with pity, in our bosoms *rise*."—CRABBE.

234 *Cowering*. This word, though not here, generally implies the notion of fear.

236 *Charm the way* = 'beguile the length or monotony of the journey of life.'

241 *Sprightly*. 'Spright' or 'sprite' is but another form of 'spirit.' Is it not the Frenchman's boast that his is the land of 'esprit'?

242 *Whom all*, &c. The poet illustrates the characteristic of being easily pleased by his own success. (Lines 247-250.)

243 *Choir*. This word here reverts to its original sense, 'a band of dancers.' Gk. χορός, Lat. 'chorus.'

244 *Tuneless*. We may hope the poet exaggerates his own deficiencies.

Loire. Rises in the Cévennes, and falls into the Atlantic after a course of 530 miles. Through what provinces and by what towns does it flow?

245 *Margin*. Any 'edge' or 'border.' Not uncommon in this sense in poetry.

247 *Faltering*. 'Failing,' 'being at fault.' From Lat. 'fallo.'

248 *But*. 'Only.' Cf. the Latin idiom, 'nihil (facere) nisi.'

249 *Village*. The place put for the inhabitants; e.g. "the talk of the town."

251 *Dame*. From Lat. 'domina,' 'the mistress of a household;' Fr. 'dame.'

252 *Maze*. A word of uncertain derivation; perhaps akin to 'miss.' As a description of a dance, the word is common enough.

253 *Gestic lore*; i.e. dancing. Cf. 'gesture,' 'gesticulation.'

256 *Idly busy*. Not an uncommon instance of 'oxymoron.' Cf. the Latin phrase, "Operose nihil agendo," and Horace's "Strenua nos exercet inertia." Pope's *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*—

"Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er."

World. In what sense is this word used here?

258 *Forms the social*; i.e. regulates the temper of society. By honour is here meant not the internal principle, but the outward distinction.

261-264 Honour is the coinage recognized or valued in society. The metaphor, like most metaphors, will not bear to be pushed very far.

262 *Traffic*. From Italian 'trafficare,' probably from Lat.

'trans,' 'beyond,' and 'facere,' 'to do.' So 'trade done beyond the seas.'

Cf. "Exercent alii socii commercia linguæ."

—OVID, *Tristia*, v. x. 35.

264 *Avarice of praise*. So Horace describes the Greeks, *Ars Poetica*, 324—

"Praeter laudem nullius avaris."

265 *They please*. "They exert themselves to please others, and are pleased at the success of their efforts, so winning the esteem and good opinion of society; hence they seem to themselves happy. And what more is required for them to be so, except the continuance of this till it becomes habitual?"

270 *Thought*. The influence which France was soon to have, and was even then beginning to acquire, over the thought of Europe, seems not to have been foreseen by Goldsmith. He is as unconscious as Johnson was of the existence of D'Alembert, Diderot, and Beaumarchais.

273 *Ostentation*; 275, *Vanity*; 277, *Pride*, are here personified. These personifications are a note of eighteenth century poetry.

273 *Tawdry*. Said to be derived from St. Audrey or St. Ethelreda, as at fairs on that saint's day gewgaws of various sorts were sold. It had not always a depreciatory sense.

275 *Pert* had at first no bad sense; probably akin to 'pretty.'

Grimace. Perhaps originally 'a grim look;' but more probably from Old Scandinavian, 'grima,' 'a mask.'

276 *Frieze*. 'The curling nap on cloth.' So 'any coarse kind of woollen cloth.' Connected with 'to frizz' of hair, or 'frizzle,' or Fr. 'friser.' "The word gets its sense in architecture from the idea of 'frizzled work;' and so 'any kind of border.'"—LATHAM. But Rev. I. Taylor (*Words and Places*, p. 291) derives 'frieze' as a cloth from Friesland, and as an architectural term from Phrygia.

Copper. Polished so as to imitate gold.

277 *Beggar pride*. The snobbishness which stints itself of daily comforts, to boast an occasional entertainment in the style of a class socially superior, has been sufficiently satirized.

Cheer. Connect the various meanings of this word.

280 *Self-applause*. The satisfaction of a good conscience.

282 *Embosomed*. A strong metaphor expressing the fact that much of the country lies actually below the sea-level.

Holland. Derived either from 'ollant,' 'marshy ground' (Taylor's *Words and Places*, p. 55), or from Ger. 'hohl,' 'the hollow land.' Cf. 'hole.' A low-lying tract in Lincolnshire is also called Holland.

283 *Methinks*. In this phrase 'me' is the dative, and 'thinks' is impersonal.

Cf. "It thinketh me I sing as wel as thou."—CHAUCEER.

285 *Sedulous*. In original meaning like 'assiduous,' 'sitting close to one's work' (from Lat. 'sedeo'). So 'diligent,' 'pains-taking.'

286 *Rampire*. The commoner form of the word in modern English is 'rampart.' From Fr. 'rempart' ('se remparer,' 'to intrench oneself'). But this form is common enough in older writers; e.g. Pope's and Dryden's translations—

"The Trojans round the place a rampire cast."

—DRYDEN, *Æneid*, vii. 213.

"So down the rampires rolls the rocky shower."

—POPE, *Iliad*, xii. 180.

288 *Butwark*. Properly 'a defensive work made with the boles or trunks of trees.' Ger. 'bollwerk,' Fr. 'boulevard.' The Helder dyke is perhaps the best instance. Nearly two leagues long, it is forty feet broad at the top, where is an excellent road; and it descends into the sea by a slope of 200 feet, at an angle of forty degrees. Huge buttresses project at certain intervals several hundred yards into the sea. It is built entirely of huge blocks of granite from Norway.

290 *Scoops out*; i.e. by keeping the sea to a higher level; not by excavating the land to a lower. So Marvell talks of the Dutch 'fishing the land to shore.'

291 *Pent*. Participle of 'to pen.' Cf. 'a sheep-pen.'

292 *Amphibious*. Usually of animals (from Gk. ἀμφι, 'around,' 'doubly,' βίος, 'life').

293 *Slow canal*. 'Sluggish,' 'whose waters have scarcely any motion.' Like 'lazy' of the Dutch Scheldt in l. 2.

Canal. From Lat. 'canalis,' 'a water-pipe;' from 'canna,' 'a reed.'

Yellow-blossomed. Probably the blooms of the tulips are meant.

295 *Mart*. Contracted from 'market,' Fr. 'marché,' Lat. 'mercatus,' from 'merx,' 'merchandise.'

296 *Rescued*, &c. Cf. Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*, i. p. 276—"Holland seems to be a conquest upon the sea, and in a manner rescued from its bosom." (Aldine edition.)

297 *Wave-subjected*. 'Subject to the waves so long as to be rendered sterile and unproductive,' or perhaps 'which lies beneath the level of the waves, so that the native is constantly employed in repairing the dykes.'

302 *With all those ills*, &c. The subject of much of the *Deserted Village*.

303 *Are*. For this plural cf. note on l. 232.

305 *Craft*. Had originally no bad sense. Cf. 'craftsman,' 'handicraft.'

306 *E'en liberty*. Cf. *Vicar of Wakefield*, ch. xix.—"Now

the possessor of accumulated wealth, when furnished with the necessities and pleasures of life, has no other method to employ the superfluity of his fortune but in purchasing power; that is, differently speaking, in making dependants, by purchasing the liberty of the needy or the venal, of men who are willing to bear the mortification of contiguous tyranny for bread." Again, "in Holland, Genoa, or Venice, the laws govern the poor, and the rich govern the law."

309 *A land, &c.* This line occurs verbatim in the *Citizen of the World*, i.: "A nation once famous for setting the world an example of freedom is now become a land of tyrants and a den of slaves." (Aldine edition.)

311 *Bent.* 'Stooping to the yoke.'

313 *Belgic sires.* Batavic would be more correct. Who was Civilis?

315 *War . . . and freedom.* Is not this taunt undeserved? The history of the 16th and 17th centuries belies it.

317 *Genius spreads her wing.* English has no genders properly speaking. When, as here, sex is attributed to a personified abstraction, as a rule the gender of the language from which the word is taken is followed, but not uncommonly the gender is determined by another principle;—the sterner or more manly qualities, &c., are masculine, as 'honour,' 'courage,' 'death;' the milder, feminine, as 'faith,' 'hope,' 'beauty.' The gender of 'genius' in this passage seems anomalous.

319 *Lawns.* Cf. *D. V.* l. 35.

Arcadian pride. Before the time of Virgil, Arcadia was more celebrated for "pastoral dulness than pastoral ideality," as the proverbial expressions "Arcadici sensus," "Arcadicae aures" (cf. Juvenal, vii. 160) sufficiently show. They were a strong and hardy, but rude and savage race, in spite of the law, mentioned by Polybius, an Arcadian himself, which made the study of music compulsory. Since the days of Virgil (cf. *Eclogues*, vii. 4; x. 30), and especially since the revival of learning, Arcadia has become the golden land of poets and romance-writers. Who wrote the "Arcadia"? When?

320 *Hydaspes.* One of the principal rivers of the Punjaub. Its Sanscrit name was Vitastâ; its usual name in modern times, Jelum. It flows into the Chenab.

Famed. An epithet imitated from Horace, who calls the stream 'fabulosus' (*Odes*, bk. i, xxii. 8), from the incredible stories narrated of it.

322 *Music melts.* A common metaphor.

Cf. "The strains decay, and melt away
In a dying, dying fall."

—POPE, *Ode on St Cecilia's Day.*

Spray. This word is different from 'spray' in the sense of

small particles of water. It is rather akin to 'sprig,' a small shoot or branch.

324 *Extremes*, &c. This somewhat obscure line is explained by those which follow. Though extremes of climate or scenery are unknown, the minds of the owners of the soil are capable of extremes of daring (326), and of independence (331).

325 *Her state*; i.e. 'power,' 'sway.'

327 *Port*. 'Bearing' (from Lat. 'porto,' I bear or carry). Cf. Gray's *Bard*, iii. 2—"Her lion port, her awe-commanding face."

330 *Forms . . . nature's*. Cf. "Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest nature's rule!"—TENNYSON, *Locksley Hall*.

332 *Imagined right*. What they think their privileges as Britons.

333 *To scan*. Literally 'to climb.' So 'to count the feet in a verse,' 'to scrutinize carefully;' here 'to examine closely, as if they belonged to himself.' 'Boasts to scan' for 'boasts the right to scan' is somewhat awkward.

335 *Thine, freedom*, &c. In thus putting forward freedom as the main point of contrast between England and foreign nations, the poet is following Addison in his *Letter written from Italy to Lord Halifax*—

"Oh, Liberty, thou goddess heavenly bright,
Profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight!

* * * * *

Thee, goddess, thee Britannia's isle adores."

But the courtly placeman does not impress on us the evils of freedom as vividly as the dissatisfied poet.

336 *Dazzle*. And so prevent the eye from steadily observing the effects.

337 *Alloy*. 'Some baser metal mixed with a finer.' From Fr. 'à la loi;' the proportions of such mixture for the purposes of coinage being regulated by law.

338 *But*. "But they are not without alloy; for fostered," &c.

341 *Lordling*. 'ling' is a common diminutive suffix; as in 'duckling,' 'gosling,' 'darling.'

344 *Minds combat*. Though members of one common country, the struggles of party are the condition of their independence.

345 *Ferments*. Agitation in politics, such as is produced by yeast in dough, or by the action of the air in certain liquids.

Imprisoned. 'Closely restrained within the bounds of law.' Illustrate this line from the history of the time.

347 *System*. Society as a connected whole, made up of various component parts.

348 *Motions . . . wheels*; i.e. of the machinery of society, the metaphor being slightly changed.

348 *Frenzy*. 'Madness;' from Gk. *φρένησις* (more common as Lat. 'phrenesis'), from *φρήν*, 'the mind.'

351 *Fictitious*. 'Artificial.'

357 *Stems*. Families.

Patriot flame. Cf. l. 200.

358 *Wrote*. A bye-form of 'written,' common in all periods of the language.

359 *Sink*. 'A drain into which refuse is poured or *sinks*.' This metaphorical use is common enough. Cf. the speech of the ship's captain to the Duke of Suffolk—

"Poole? Sir Poole? Lord?

Ay, kennel, puddle, sink; whose filth and dirt
Troubles the silver spring where England drinks."

—SHAKESPEARE, 2 *Henry VI.* iv. 1.

Level. Cf. l. 221.

363 *Ye powers of, &c.* This couplet recalls Pope's *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*—

"Why bade ye else, ye powers, her soul aspire
Beyond the vulgar flights of low desire?"

366 *Rabble*. 'A mob.' Originally 'raving;' akin to Lat. 'rabies.'

370 *To secure*; i.e. 'that I might secure them.'

372 *Those who think*. So far from 'just experience' teaching this, no nation has ever been governed by its thinkers. Plato's philosopher-king is still an unrealized ideal, though a Marcus Aurelius may have approximated to it. For a similar expression vide Thomson's *Seasons* (*Summer*)—

"While thus laborious crowds
Ply the tough oar, philosophy directs
The ruling helm."

374 *Is but to lay, &c.* No class is to be exempt. But with reference to what is the proportion to be assessed?

375 *Order*. 'Class in the state.'

377 *How blind, &c.* Understand 'are they.'

378 *A part, &c.* Freedom is something that all must share. It must not be the prerogative of a feudal aristocracy, or even of an Athenian democracy, denied to the lower strata of serfs or slaves.

380 *Warms*. An active verb, governing 'my soul,' understood from the previous line.

381 *Blockade*. 'Encircle the throne, so as not to allow either the royal mercy to reach the circles outside, nor the petitions of the humbler classes to reach the throne.'

382 *Contracting*; i.e. 'narrowing the limits of.' Cf. l. 284.

385 *Each wanton*. 'While each judge unscrupulously draws up fresh statutes, with severer punishments.'

386 *Rich men rule*. Cf. note on l. 306; also *Vicar of Wake-*

field, ch. xxvii.—“It were highly to be wished that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than severity; that it would soon be convinced that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishments familiar, but formidable.” . . . “It is among the citizens of a refined community that penal laws, which are in the hands of the rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older, seems to acquire the moroseness of age; and as if our property were become dearer in proportion as it increased, as if the more enormous our wealth the more extensive our fears, all our possessions are paled up with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to scare every invader.” These were advanced views for Goldsmith’s time.

388 *Pillage*. ‘To plunder.’ From Lat. ‘pilo.’

390 *Tear off reserve*; i.e. ‘abandon caution and concealment.’

392 *Petty*. Fr. ‘petit.’

To the throne. Cf. the conclusion of the vicar’s harangue in *Vicar of Wakefield*, ch. xix.

393 *Baleful*. ‘Full of misery or woe.’ ‘Bale’ is from A.S. ‘bæl.’

394 *When first ambition*, &c. In all ages the worst foes to monarchical power have been the aristocracy. Thus in Greece the early tyrannies were almost universally overthrown by oligarchies. Cf. the barons’ wars in English history, and the attitude of the crown towards the nobles in France.

395 *Polluting honour*, &c. It is one of the prerogatives of the crown to be the fountain of honour. Has it always been the fountain of that honour which Wordsworth describes as—

“The finest sense

Of *justice* which the human mind can frame,

Intent each lurking frailty to disdain,” &c.?

396 *Gave wealth*, &c.; i.e. gave wealth a double, because an undivided power, over the mind.

397 *Have we*, &c. Cf. *D. V.* l. 49–56.

398 *Her useful sons*; i.e. by emigration.

Ore. Metal in an unworked state. From A.S. ‘ore,’ which in A.S. meant also the metal, and a coin worth from sixteen to twenty pence.

401 *Seen opulence*, &c. Cf. *D. V.* l. 63, 64.

403 *And over fields*, &c. Cf. *D. V.* l. 65, 66.

405 *Have we not*, &c. Cf. *D. V.* l. 275–282.

407 *Beheld the duteous*, &c. Cf. *D. V.* l. 362–384.

410 *Oswego*. A river which joins lakes Oneida and Ontario. There is a town of the same name near the place where it falls into Lake Ontario. The river is in the State of New York, and is sometimes called the Onondaga.

412 *Niagara*. Notice the accent falling on the penultimate.

412 *Stuns with thundering sound.* "The noise is a vast thunder, filling the heavens, shaking the earth, and leaving the mind, although perfectly conscious of safety, lost and astonished. . . . Two gentlemen who had lived sometime at York, on the north side of Lake Ontario . . . informed me that it was not unfrequently heard there. The distance is fifty miles."—DWIGHT, *Travels in New England*, vol. iv. letter iv.

414 *Tangled forests.* Cf. *D. V.* l. 349.

415 *Where beasts.* Cf. *D. V.* l. 355.

416 *Marks.* Has here lost its transitive meaning. Cf. 'marksman.'

Murderous. Cf. *D. V.* l. 356.

417 *Giddy; i.e.* 'whirling round.'

418 *Distressful yells.* 'Cries of distress.' 'Yell,' like 'howl,' or Lat. 'ululo,' is formed from the sound.

420 *To stop too fearful.* This line was written by Dr. Johnson. *Vide* Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ch. xix., under the year 1766: "In the year 1783, he, at my request, marked with a pencil the lines which he had furnished, which are only line 420 and the concluding ten lines, except the last couplet but one. He added, 'these are all of which I can be sure.' They bear a small proportion to the whole."

423 *Vain; i.e.* because the poet has been trying to discover, in the external conditions of climate, government, &c., the abode of happiness; and that after all 'centres in the mind;' *i.e.* 'is dependent on internal conditions.'

426 *A good each.* For happiness and freedom may be attained under any form of government. (Cf. Pope's *Essay on Man*, ii. 303—

"For forms of government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administered is best.")

Or even, as Goldsmith shows, in spite of the greatest maladministration. *Vide* Introduction.

429 *How small, &c.* Cf. note on l. 420.

434 *Glides the smooth current.* Dr. Johnson was thinking of Horace's "Secretum iter et fallentis semita vitæ."

435 *Wheel.* "*Breaking on the wheel.* This barbarous mode of death is of great antiquity. It was used for the punishment of great criminals, such as assassins and parricides, first in Germany. It was also used in the Inquisition, and rarely anywhere else, till Francis I. ordered it to be inflicted upon robbers, first breaking their bones by strokes with a heavy iron club, and then leaving them to expire on the wheel."—HAYDN, *Dict. of Dates*. Allusions to it are common enough in the poets. Cf. Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 308—

"Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?"

436 *Luke's iron crown.* "Goldsmith himself was in a mis-

take. In the *Respublica Hungarica* there is an account of a desperate rebellion in the year 1514, headed by two brothers of the name of Zeck, George and Luke. When it was quelled, George, not Luke, was punished by his head being encircled with a red-hot iron crown, 'coronâ candescente ferreâ coronatur.'"—BOSWELL, *Life of Dr. Johnson*, ch. xix. The name of the leaders of this peasant revolt was Dosa, not Zeck; and George Dosa was punished by being seated on a red-hot iron throne, with red-hot crown and sceptre; his veins were then opened, and he had to drink a glass of his own blood. He was then torn to pieces, and roasted; and his flesh was given as food to his principal supporters, who had been purposely famished.—*Biographie Universelle*.

Damiens. On January 5th, 1757, Damiens stabbed Louis XV. in his right side, as he was getting into his carriage at Versailles. Though the wound was very slight, and Damiens insisted that his intention was not to kill the king, but to frighten him and give him a warning, he was most barbarously tortured, and at the end of March was executed. His right hand was burnt off, his arms and legs torn with red-hot pincers, and melted lead, boiling oil, wax, resin, &c., poured into the wounds; and finally four horses were half an hour in pulling him limb from limb.

437 *Remote*. Cf. l. 1.

Known. This participle agrees with the nominatives in lines 435, 436. Notice that the logical nominative of the sentence is 'the lifted axe, &c., but rarely known;' i.e. 'the almost total absence of the lifted axe,' &c.

*THE DESERTED VILLAGE.**The Argument.*

(1-34) The poet apostrophizes his native village, and revives his recollections of the old scenes, the old life, the old amusements. (35-50) But all is now changed; the whole manor has passed into the hands of one proprietor, the former tenants are ejected, and desolation reigns everywhere. (51-56) Surely it is a bad sign for a country when the accumulation of money, and consequently of land, in a few hands exterminates the peasantry. (57-62) In old time the boast of England was its class of happy peasant proprietors; (63-74) now the ostentatious pomp of successful trade has everywhere superseded them. (75-82) Nor is Auburn any exception.

(83-96) Thither the poet had always longed to return in his old age, (97-112) and, in retirement from the sinful and selfish world, prepare for death. (113-136) But instead of a busy village, making the evening cheerful with the hum of varied life, a poverty-stricken widow is the sole remaining inhabitant. (137-162) Gone is the very house of the village preacher, a man simple, consistent, charitable to beggar, spendthrift, or broken-down veteran; (163-170) sympathetic and persuasive; (171-176) the comfort of the dying; (177-192) the ornament of the church, and the friend of all his flock. (193-216) Gone is also the school, where ruled the village schoolmaster, a severe disciplinarian though a kind-hearted man, and in the eyes of the rustics a prodigy of learning and argumentative skill. (217-236) Gone too is the village inn, where the village statesmen used to talk in the quaintly-furnished parlour; (237-250) not even its associations, so pleasant to all classes, could save it.

(251-264) Yet the simple happiness of country life is more real than the toiling pleasure of the fashionable world. (265-286) Splendour and happiness are not synonymous. The increase of riches does not necessarily imply the increase of wealth, either in its original or technical sense. The rich man's pleasure-grounds take up room sufficient to support many poor; (287-302) and the splendour of the land is as sure a sign of decay as artfulness in a woman's dress is of fading beauty.

(303-308) Nor has the ejected peasant any other place open to him; the common is appropriated by the wealthy. (309-336) The life of the town excites envy, and shocks by the sharpness of its contrasts between courtier and artizan, the fashionable throng and the houseless wanderer. (337-340) But the expatriated inhabitants of Auburn are not there; (341-362) their miserable lot has driven them to settle in the tropical and unhealthy swamps and forests of the new world. (363-384) Sorrowful indeed is the parting of a family from old scenes and old friends, and the sundering of young affections.

(385-394) Luxury, far from being worth the unhappiness it causes, is the insidious cause of national ruin. (395-430) Even now the rural virtues of contentment, hospitality, piety, loyalty, and love are leaving the unworthy land; and Poetry, to which the poet has devoted his life, is departing with them. But wherever she may find a home, she has this lesson to teach, that to be rich is not to be happy; that commercial prosperity is but a rotten foundation for national greatness.

1 *Auburn* is usually identified with Lissoy or Lishoy, near Ballymahon, about seven miles distant from Athlone. Here the poet's brother, the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, to whom the poem of *The Traveller* was dedicated, lived as rector for many years. "The church," says Sir W. Scott, *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. iii. 250, 12mo (1834), "which tops the neighbouring hill, the mill, and the brook, are still pointed out; and a hawthorn has suffered the penalty of poetical celebrity, being cut to pieces by those admirers of the bard who desired to have classical toothpick cases and tobacco-stoppers. Much of this supposed locality may be fanciful; but it is a pleasing testimony to the poet in the land of his fathers."

Village. Through the French, from Lat. 'villa,' 'a country house; probably a contraction of 'vicula,' diminutive from 'vicus,' 'a quarter or district of a city,' and often 'a hamlet' or 'country seat.' Akin to Gr. *oikos*. (Cf. English 'wick' or 'wich' in *Chiswick*, *Norwich*, &c.) The termination '-age,' from the Lat. '-aticus,' means 'a collection.'

2 *Health*. A.S. 'hælan,' 'to heal.' A.S. 'hæl,' 'whole.' 'To heal' is 'to make whole.'

Plenty. Old Fr. 'plenté,' Lat. 'plenitas,' from 'plenus,' 'full.'

Servant. Originally 'a servant.' So 'a young man,' 'a peasant,' 'a shepherd,' 'a lover.' Used vaguely and somewhat affectedly in eighteenth century poetry. Cf. *Traveller*, l. 48—

"Ye bending swains that dress the flowery vale."

4 *Parting*. 'Departing.' Cf. l. 171, "parting life;" also Gray's *Elegy*—

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day."

4 *Delayed*. Here used in a neuter sense; subject 'blooms.' From Fr. 'délai;' Lat. 'dilatio,' 'dilatatum,' passive participle of 'differo,' 'to carry asunder,' 'defer,' 'protract.'

5 *Bowers*. Originally 'a chamber' (A.S. 'bur') or 'private room,' Cf. Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, canto i. 1—

"The Ladye had gone to her secret bower."

So 'a leafy recess,' especially in a garden.

Innocence. Lat. 'innocens' ('in,' 'not,' 'noceo,' 'I hurt').

6 *Seats*, &c. = 'where, as a youth, I sat.'

When, &c. Cf. Pope's *Essay on Man*, epistle ii.—

"Behold the child, by nature's kindly law

Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw."

7 *Thy*; *i.e.* of sweet Auburn (l. 1).

8 *Humble*. Lat. 'humilis,' 'low,' from 'humus,' 'the ground.'

Cf. Gk. χαμᾶλ.

Happiness. From adjective 'happy;' enjoying or giving good hap, luck, fortune. Cf. 'perhaps.'

Scene. From Fr. 'scene,' Lat. 'scena,' Gk. σκηνή.

Endeared each scene; *i.e.* 'made every view dear to me.'

9 *Charm*. In this sense very far removed from its original meaning, 'a song' (Lat. 'carmen'). Hence 'a spell,' or 'something with an irresistible power,' especially 'an irresistible power to please.' Cf. the divergence in the meanings of the two derivatives of Lat. 'incantare,' 'enchanting' and 'incantation.'

10 *Sheltered*; *i.e.* from the wind.

Cot. 'A cottage.' A.S. 'cote.' Cf. 'dove-cote,' 'sheep-cote.' It is also a very common termination of names of villages.

12 *Decent*; *i.e.* 'becoming' (Lat. 'deceat,' 'it becomes') its object and its position.'

Topt. 'Was on the summit of.'

13 *Bush*, like 'church,' 'mill,' 'brook,' 'farm,' 'cot,' is in apposition to 'charm' in l. 7. Cf. Burns, *Cotter's Saturday Night*—

"'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair

In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,

Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the gale."

14 *Talking age*. The talk of old folks: the very common use of an abstract for a concrete noun. Cf. l. 303, 320.

Made. Participle agreeing with 'seats,' l. 13.

16 *When toil*, &c. 'When a remission of toil allowed play to have its turn:' 'a remission of toil giving an interval of play.'

Remitting. This intransitive use is somewhat rare.

Its. Strictly this would refer to the subject of the verb 'toil,' but such a use of the reflexive pronoun is not uncommon either

in English or Latin. Cf. the picture of the recreations of the countryman, Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 527—

“Ipse dies agitat festos; fususque per herbam,
Ignis ubi in medio, et socii cratera coronant,
Te libans, Lenææ, vocat: pecorisque magistris
Velocis jaculi certamina ponit in ulmo,
Corporaque agresti nudant prædura palaestro.”

17 “*All the village*,” &c. ‘All the villagers in a long line or procession;’ but the word ‘train’ is frequently used very vaguely by Goldsmith.

Village. Substantive for adjective. Cf. the phrase “country-folk,” “morning face” (l. 200); or for the same word, cf. Gray’s *Elegy*—

“Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The petty tyrant of his fields withstood;”

and l. 327, “village plenty.”

18 *Led up.* ‘Marshalled and arranged in order the players.’

Spreading tree. An inseparable accompaniment of the ideal village green.

19 *Many a*, &c. ‘The players in many a game (such as ‘kiss in the ring’) formed circles under its shade.’ Cf. ‘a round game.’

Pastime. ‘Anything that helps to pass away the time.’ Cf. Shakespeare’s *Richard III.*—

“Why I in this weak piping time of peace
Have no delight to pass away the time.”

20 *The young contending.* Nominative absolute. Cf. l. 79, and many others.

Surveyed. ‘Looked on,’ Old Fr. ‘surveoir,’ Lat. ‘super-video.’

21 *Many a gambol*, &c.; i.e. ‘many joining in the sports played merry pranks o’er the ground.’

Gambol. Literally ‘to frisk,’ or ‘dance playfully;’ from Fr. ‘gambiller,’ ‘to frisk about.’ Cf. Fr. ‘jambe,’ ‘a leg’ (‘jam-bon,’ ‘ham’); Ital. ‘gamba.’ Cf. ‘viol di gamba.’ This word is a good instance of the ‘desynonymizing’ process going on in language: “‘gambling’ may be, as with a fearful irony it is called, *play*, but it is nearly as distant from ‘gambolling’ as hell is from heaven.”—Trench, *Study of Words*, sect. v., where many other instances of the same process are adduced; e.g. ‘cure’ and ‘care,’ ‘pennon’ and ‘pinion,’ ‘inch’ and ‘ounce,’ ‘triumph’ and ‘trump’ (in cards).

Gambol frolics. The ‘gambol’ is said to ‘frolic’ by the same figure of speech which makes the laughter titter in l. 28.

Frolic. Cf. Ger. ‘fröhlich,’ ‘gay;’ common both as verb and substantive; also as an adjective in all times, from Milton to Byron. Cf. *L’Allegro*—

"The frolic wind that breathes the spring."

22 *Sleights*. 'Cunning,' 'arts,' 'dexterity;' perhaps akin to 'sly.' Cf. Shakespeare's 3 *Henry VI.* iv. 2—

"As Ulysses and stout Diomede

With sleight and manhood stole to Rhoesus' tents."
Macbeth, act iii. sc. 5—

"And that, distilled by magic sleights,
Shall raise such artificial sprites," &c.

Now the word survives chiefly in the phrase, 'sleight of hand' = 'legerdemain.'

Fait. From Fr. 'fait,' Lat. 'factum,' from 'facio.'

Went round. Cf. Thomson's *Seasons*—*Spring*, l. 249—

"Meantime the song went round."

23 *Still*. 'Ever,' 'always.'

Tired; i.e. 'wearied those who joined in it.'

24 *Succeeding sports*. 'A succession of amusement by perpetual change renewed the spirits of the happy company.'

25 *The dancing*, &c. 'The pair of dancers who danced merely to make themselves remarkable.'

25-30 Explanatory of the words sports in l. 24.

26. *By holding out*. 'By keeping on dancing that each might weary out his rival.'

27 *Mistrustless of*. 'With no mistrust of,' 'unconscious of;' by no means a common word, but not invented by Goldsmith.

28 *Secret*; i.e. 'hidden from the notice of its object.'

Laughter tittered. Cf. l. 21 for this figure of speech.

Titter. Formed from the sound made—onomatopœia. Cf. 'giggle,' laughter of a slightly different character, producing a different sound.

29 *Bashful*. 'Easily disconcerted,' 'modest;' from verb, 'abash:' Old Fr. 'esbahir;' Fr. 'ébahir,' 'to astonish;' literally, 'to make to gape.'

Sidelong. Cf. Longfellow's *Beware*, from the German—

"She has two eyes, so soft and brown,
Take care!

She gives a side-glance, and looks down,
Beware! beware!"

or Thomson's *Seasons*—*Summer*—

"In sidelong glances from her downcast eye."

30 *Matron*. 'A married woman.'

That would. Less severe than 'that does.'

32 *With sweet*, &c. Following one another merrily shewed how even a life of labour might be enjoyable.

33 *Cheerful*. Literally 'making the countenance glad' (Old Fr. 'chiere,' 'the countenance.' Cf. Gk. *κάρα*). Cf. *Ps.* civ. 15: 'Oil to make him of a cheerful countenance.'

- 33 *Influence shed.* Cf. Milton's *L'Allegro*, 121—
 "With store of ladies whose bright eyes
 Rain influence, and judge the prize
 Of wit or arms."

What is the metaphor from? Cf. note on l. 200.

35 *Smiling Village.* A common instance of what Mr. Ruskin calls the pathetic fallacy, which consists in the attribution of the personal feelings of the observer to the inanimate object observed. This fallacy, which is often little more than a metaphorical way of writing, is pushed to its furthest extreme in Tennyson's *Maud*, xxii. 10, where the lover makes the inanimate objects around articulate his own hopes and thoughts:

- "There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate;
 The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near!'
 And the white rose weeps, 'She is late!'
 * The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear!'
 And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'"

For this particular phrase cf. Ovid, *Met.* 204—
 "Florumque coloribus almus
 Ridet ager."

Tennyson, *Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere*—

"Blue isles of heaven laughed between."

The *Version of Psalm xxiii.*, attributed to Addison—

"The barren wilderness shall smile."

Cf. also l. 40, 299.

Lawn. Here almost in the sense of 'plain' in l. 1, the idea of 'greenness' being also implied; but sometimes that idea is absent. Cf. Milton's *L'Allegro*, 71—

"Russet lawns and fallows gray."

The word properly means 'An open green space,' especially between woods. Cf. Milton's *Par. Lost*, iv.—"Betwixt them (*i.e.* groves) lawns . . . were interposed;" akin to 'lane,' and probably to 'land,' and Welsh 'llan.'

36 *Are fled.* 'Fly' is both neuter and active. 'Have fled' would be equally correct with 'are fled.'

Withdrawn = 'taken from thee.'

37 *Tyrant.* The 'one only master.' Cf. l. 39. A large landowner, bent on uniting properties into one large estate. "Lishoy was formerly the estate of the Dillons, who sold it in 1730 to General Napier, who amassed a large fortune at Vigo. He enclosed a domain of nine miles in circumference, in which were included three respectable families, the Dawsons, Lemans, Newsteads, with all their tenants and dependants. On the general's death, his house was robbed by the indignant peasants, and all his woods cut down." *Vide* note to Aldine edition of Goldsmith.

37 *Tyrant*. Properly 'an absolute ruler.' So 'any one who makes an oppressive use of his power.' (Gr. *τύραννος*.)

38 *Green*. 'Fertile district,' used without any definite meaning, as 'lawn,' l. 35.

39 *Only*. Literally 'one-like,' 'single.' So that this phrase 'one only' is, strictly speaking, tautological.

40 *Half a*, &c. ; i.e. semi-cultivation renders less productive.

Stint. Literally 'to shorten' (cf. 'stunt,' 'stunted'); so 'to restrain.' For an ancient instance of a similar complaint to this, cf. Pliny—"Latifundia perdidere Italiam." 'The system of large farms has been the ruin of Italy.' To enter into the question generally would require too much space.

41 *Glassy*. 'Clear as glass.' Cf. Horace, *Od.* iii. xiii. 1—

"O fons Bandusiæ splendidior vitro."

The day. 'The sun's rays.' Cf. l. 348.

42 *But choked*. 'But, impeded by the sedge, with difficulty makes its way through the weeds.'

Works its weary way. "Alliteration's artful aid" is here expressive of the efforts of the half-choked current. Cf. Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, 365—

"Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows ;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should, like the torrent, roar."

43 *Glade*. 'An open place in woods,' properly 'one through or along which the light shines' (akin to 'glitter').

Guest. Apposition 'to bittern.'

44 *Bittern*. A bird of the heron family, now nearly exterminated by the spread of cultivation and civilization. It is said to have derived its name from the resemblance of its note or cry to the lowing of an ox. O.E. 'bittour,' Fr. 'butor.' Goldsmith himself remarks (*Anim. Nature*, vi. p. 2) : "There is no sound so dismally hollow as the booming of a bittern." To be true to nature in the choice of epithets is one of the surest marks of the genuine poet.

45 *Desert*. Now usually substantive ; here an adjective.

46 *Tires*. Cf. Latin 'fatigo,' used metaphorically of inanimate objects. Virgil's *Æn.* ix. 605—

"Venatu invigilant pueri, silvasque fatigant."

Ovid's *Met.* i. 573—

"Sonitu plusquam vicina fatigat."

Echoes. Gr. *ἠχώ*. Personified as an oread or mountain-nymph.

Unvaried. The lapwing is often called, from its unvarying note, the 'peewit,' especially in the midland counties.

47 *Sunk*. The natural order of the subject, predicate, and copula in the sentence is here inverted for effect. For a good

instance of this figure being carried through several lines, *vide* Scott's *Marmion*, canto vi. st. 24.

"'A Home!' 'A Gordon!' was the cry;

Loud were the clanging blows.

Advanced—forced back—*now low, now high,*

The pennon sunk and rose;

As bends the bark's mast in the gale,

When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,

It wavered 'mid the foes."

All. Agrees with 'bowers.'

50 *Far, far away.* Repetition of 'far,' for effect. Cf. 'long, long ago.' This picture of the sorrowing emigrant is expanded in lines 340-384.

51 *Fares.* The primary meaning of the word 'to fare' is 'to go,' or 'to travel;' so this phrase is exactly equivalent to "Ill goes it with the land." 'Fare' is chiefly used now as 'the price of a journey or passage,' or as 'food;' also in composition, 'welfare,' and in the phrase 'farewell.'

Ills. It is certainly an error to repeat the word again so soon in a different sense. Cf. on *Traveller*, l. 45.

52 'Where an increase of wealth is accompanied by a decrease of population.'

54 *A breath; i.e.* 'the mere word of a king,' who is the 'fountain of honour.' Cf. Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night*—

"Princes and lords are but the breath of kings."

55 *Peasantry.* The inhabitants of the country (as opposed to the town). Fr. 'paysan,' from 'pays,' country; Lat. 'pagus,' a village, district (whence 'pagan'). Cf. *Traveller*, l. 83.

56 It is possible, and of course necessary, to replace some of them by fresh tillers of the soil; but the strong hereditary attachment to particular families and localities, which has distinguished the British peasantry, is necessarily the growth of time.

57 The tendency of most poets of any but the most modern school has been to look back on the past with regret, to be, like Horace's old men, 'laudatores temporis acti.' The more modern view sees that

"The past may win

A glory from its being far:"

and much that used to be believed about the happiness of merry England is justly regarded as exploded rubbish. Froude, however, holds that the peasantry have lost considerably in comparative comfort by the advance of civilization.—*History of England*, chap. i.

Ere England's griefs began. The poet would have found it very difficult to fix this date to his satisfaction.

58 *Rood.* The fourth part of an acre. 'Rood' is properly the same word as 'rod,' which has also a definite value in measure—

ment. The word is also used to express the cross of Christ, as in the compounds 'rood-loft,' 'rood-screen,' 'holy-rood.'

59 In these four lines the poet certainly had in view the celebrated panegyric of country life in Virgil's second *Georgic*, especially lines 459, 460—

"Quibus ipsa . . . Fundit humo facilem victum justissima tellus;" and lines 467-470—

"At secunda quies, et nescia fallere vita
Dives opum variarum; at latis otia fundis,
Speluncæ, vivique lacus
Et patiens operum, exiguoque assueta juvenus."

Her. See note on 'genius,' *Traveller*, l. 317. Here too Goldsmith is singular in the gender.

Wholesome = 'healthy.' *Vide* note on l. 2.

62 = 'To have no experience of the vices and anxieties consequent on the accumulation of wealth, is to be wealthy in the truest sense.'

63 *Trade's*, &c. 'The heartless votaries of money-making, having purchased the estates of the old families, seem usurpers, and use their power tyrannically, in 'evicting,' or turning out, the peasant population.'

64 *Usurp.* Why plural?

65 *Lawn.* *Vide* note on l. 35.

Hamlet. 'A small village.' From A. S. 'ham,' the modern 'home' still surviving as the termination of many proper names; e.g. Twickenham, Caterham, Fakenham, &c.

66 *Cumbrous pomp.* 'Tasteless ostentation,' 'vulgar display of excessive costliness.'

Pomp. Literally 'a sending' (πομπή, from πέμπω, 'I send'), an 'escort,' so any showy 'procession,' a 'pageant,' so 'ceremony,' 'splendour.' Cf. l. 259. Cf. Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, act i. scene i.—

"But safer triumph is this funeral pomp."

67 = 'The enjoyment of wealth creates more wants than it satisfies.'

68 = 'The troubles, discomforts, and disappointments into which the pride of the silly devotees of fashion leads them.'

67, 68 Alliteration again helps the effect of this line. The grammar of these two lines is somewhat faulty, as there is no verb; and even if 'repose' be supplied from the previous line, it will not make any satisfactory sense. A 'pang' cannot be said to repose. In Latin the figure would be called zeugma, a verb such as 'is,' or 'exists,' being supplied from repose.

69 'Hours blooming at the command of plenty' is rather a forced metaphor.

72 *Lived in each look* = 'were seen reflected in every glance,' more or less characteristic of all rustic populations.

75 *Parent*, &c. = rather a violent figure, merely 'the producer ('pariens') or causer of happy hours.'

76 *Forlorn*. Not a mere epithet. 'The glades by their forlornness prove the power of the tyrant.' Cf. l. 37.

Confess. 'Give evidence of.' For a similar use, cf. an *Ode* of Prior's, beginning—

"When blooming youth and gay delight
Sit on thy rosy cheeks confessed."

78 *Tangling*. 'Entangling the walker in the briars straggling over the path.'

Ruined; i.e. the fences, buildings, trees, &c.

79 *Many a year elapsed*. Imitation of the classical construction of absolute cases. Cf. l. 20.

77-80 For these lines the first edition has the couplet—

"Here as with doubtful, pensive steps I range,
Trace every scene, and wonder at the change."

81 *Remembrance*. 'Memory' is generally the word used in this semi-personified sense, as remembrance is strictly rather the art than the power of remembering.

82 *Swells at my breast*. The verb 'swell' is used very commonly, especially in Shakespeare, of various emotions—malice, anger, pride, envy, ambition, &c.

Turns, &c. 'The pleasant reminiscences of the past are painful in sight of the desolation around.'

85 *Latest hours*. 'The last hours of my life,' 'last' being merely a contraction of 'latest.'

Crown. 'To complete,' as in the Latin saying, "Finis coronat opus." Cf. *Traveller*, l. 17.

86 *To lay me down*; i.e. '(to crown) by laying myself down.'

87 *Husband*. 'To economize,' 'make the most of.' Even 'husbandry' used to be used in this sense. Cf. *Macbeth*, ii. 1—"There's husbandry in heaven; their candles are all out." Vide also *Timon of Athens*, ii. 2 (164); *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 2 (7). Husband, from A.S. 'hus,' 'a house,' and either 'bond,' as 'keeping the house together,' or a Scandinavian word, 'buandi,' 'the possessor of a farm,' which points naturally to the ordinary sense of the words 'husbandry,' 'husbandman.'

Taper. 'A small candle.' The figure of a candle as applied to life is worked out at length, and with great ingenuity, by the old poet Quarles, in his *Hieroglyphikes of the Life of Man*.

88 *By repose*. These words are to be taken with the verb 'to keep,' and not with 'wasting'; just as a candle which is not moved will burn longer than one which is always being carried about.

89 *Still*. 'Even in declining years.'

92 *I saw*. But for the rhyme, the poet would probably have written, 'I had seen.' Cf. *Traveller*, l. 72.

93 This is literally true of the running of a hunted hare.

94 *Pants*. Used as a verb of motion by a very natural transference of ideas.

From. This word is superfluous, though often used before 'thence' and 'whence.' Cf. *St. Mark* vi. 2: "From whence hath this man these things?"

95 *I still*, &c. Notice the effect of this triply-repeated phrase at the commencement of lines 85, 89, 95.

My long, &c. For the construction, cf. line 79.

97 *Friend to*, &c. = 'Pleasant in the decline or downhill of life.'

Cf. "In the downhill of life, when I find I'm declining," &c.

—*Old Song*.

98 *Retreats*. Not in apposition to 'retirement,' but a fresh idea.

That. The antecedent to this is 'retreats,' not 'care.'

Must. 'Destined never to be mine.'

99 *Crowns*. Cf. line 85.

100 *Age*; i.e. 'old age,' just as we say, "an aged man."

102 *And*, &c. 'And, as it is hard to resist temptation, learns to avoid it.'

103 *Born*, &c.; i.e. 'to labour and sorrow.'

104 *Tempt*. 'To make trial of;' a Latinism. Cf. Virgil, *Ecl.* iv. 32: "Tentare Thetim ratibus."

105 *Surly*. Probably A.S. 'sure-lice,' 'sour-like.'

Guilty. As violating the laws of natural compassion and charity.

106 *Spurn*. To 'kick with the spur or heel;' e.g. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, act. iii. sc. 2: "Who even but now did spurn me with his foot." Hence 'to drive away or reject contemptuously.'

Imploring famine; i.e. 'famished beggars.' Abstract for concrete. Cf. line 14.

107 = 'But while angels around him watch over him who has been a friend to virtue, he advances calmly to meet his death.'

109 Cf. Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*—

"An age which melts with unperceived decay,
And glides in modest innocence away."

110 *Slopes*. As a verb, usually neuter; here active. 'While a contented acquiescence makes the path to the grave a gentle decline.'

111 = 'And with visions of future bliss, which grew ever brighter to the very last moment of life, he seemed to be already in heaven before he had left this lower world.'

114 *Village murmur*. The mingled sounds of village life.

114 *Murmur*. A word formed from the sound. *Vide* note 'titter,' line 28.

115 *Careless*. Not here 'heedless,' but 'devoid of anxiety' (as Lat. 'securus'); by a natural license transferred from the poet's feelings to his steps. Cf. 'careful,' for 'full of care or woe,' in the *Braes of Yarrow*, by Hamilton of Bangour—

"Take off, take off these bridal weeds,
And crown my careful head with yellow."

117 *Responsive*. 'Answering.' Poets of the eighteenth century indulged in many epithets ending in '-ive,' which are now either rare or obsolete. So in Thomson's *Seasons* we find 'concoctive,' 'prelusive,' 'redressive,' 'repercussive,' and others. For this cf. Tennyson's *Aylmer's Field*—

"Queenly responsive, when the loyal hand," &c.

Or Thomson's *Seasons* (*Spring*)—

"Lows responsive from the vales."

118 *Sober*. An epithet expressing the slow pace and sedate movements of cows. Probably derived from Lat. 'sobrius.'

Low. Like 'gabble' (line 118), 'bay' (line 121), 'cackle,' 'bleat,' &c., formed from the sound.

121 *Bay*. In a transitive sense for 'to bay at.' Cf. Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, act iv. sc. 3—

"I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon,
Than such a Roman."

122 *That spoke* = which bespoke or proved a mind relieved from care and toil. Cf. 'vacant hilarity,' *Vicar of W.* ch. v.

123 *These*; i.e. 'the various sounds made by the villagers.'

124 *Nightingale*. A.S. 'niht-gale,' from 'niht,' 'night,' and 'galan,' 'to sing'; cognate with the Gk. *καλεῖν* (*k* changes to *g* by Grimm's law).

126 *Fluctuate in* = 'float upon,' with the idea of rising and falling in loudness and intensity. From Lat. 'fluctus,' 'a wave'; 'fluo,' 'I flow.'

128 *Bloomy*. By no means a common adjective. 'Bloomy flush' = 'blooming glow.' Cf. Milton's 1st *Sonnet*—

"O nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray."

Flush. 'A flow of blood to the face.' So 'bright colouring,' literal and metaphorical. Here the 'flush of life' is its brightness and gaiety.

129 *Thing*. The use of this word heightens the picture of the woman's wretchedness = 'one who seemed to have lost even all likeness to a human being.'

130 *Plashy*. An uncommon adjective, which would not have been remarkable in the pages of Mr. Browning, but which sounds strange in the writings of a purist like Goldsmith. The substantive 'plash' (of course, like 'splash,' onomatopœic in origin) is not so uncommon. Cf. Tennyson's *Vision of Sin*, l. 5—

"Old *plash* of rains, and refuse patched with moss."

131 *Forced*, &c. 'Obliged in her old age to get her daily bread by stripping,' &c.

132 *Mantling*. 'Covering like a cloak,' Cf. Shakespeare's *King Lear*, act iii. sc. 2—

"Drinks the green mantle of the standing pool."

Merchant of Venice, act i. sc. 1—

"Whose visages do cream and mantle like a standing pond."

133 *Wintry*. 'To use during the winter,' just as we speak of 'summer' or 'winter' clothes.

135 *The sad historian*. 'Sadly telling the story of.'

Pensive. (Cf. on l. 35.) The plain which made the beholder sad on account of its desolation.

137 *Copse*. 'A small wood' or 'plantation,' probably originally grown for the purpose of 'cutting,' Fr. 'couper.'

138 *Still*. For the sake of the rhythm is put slightly out of place; it of course ought to follow 'flower.'

139 *The place disclose*; i.e. 'mark the spot.'

140 *Village*. Substantive used as adjective. Cf. lines 17, 327.

Mansion. Usually now used of a house of large size, etymologically any 'dwelling-place' (from Lat. 'maneo,' 'I remain'), and connected not with 'manse,' but 'manor.' Cf. *The Traveller*, l. 167. Many of the features in this beautiful description of the village clergyman are probably borrowed from the character of the poet's brother, the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, curate of Lishoy. He was a man of great ability and considerable distinction both at school and at college; but marrying early, he retired to a humble curacy, where he lived, known to few beyond the limits of his parish, but wonderfully beloved and respected by all who knew him. In the introduction to the *Traveller*, Oliver Goldsmith describes him as "a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year." He continues, "I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great, and the labourers are but few; while you have left the field of ambition, where the labourers are many, and the harvest not worth carrying away." Cf. Wordsworth's *Excursion*, bk. v.—

"There in his allotted home

Abides, from year to year, a genuine priest,

The shepherd of his flock; or, as a king

Is styled, when most affectionately praised,

The father of his people. Such is he;

And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice

Under his spiritual sway. . . .

The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,
And learning's solid dignity. . . .
Hither in prime of manhood he withdrew
From academic bowers. He loved the spot—
Who does not love his native soil? He prized
The ancient rural character, composed
Of simple manners, feelings unsuppress'd
And undisguised, and strong and serious thought;
A character reflected in himself,
With such embellishment as well beseems
His rank and sacred function."

Cf. also Dryden's *Character of a Good Parson*, imitated from the *Prologue* to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and especially lines 144-146, with—

"Nor rode himself to Paul's, the public fair,
To chaffer for preferment with his gold,
Where sinecures and bishoprics are sold."

And line 170, with—

"He taught the gospel rather than the law;
And forced himself to drive, but loved to draw.

* * * * *

His preaching much, but more his practice wrought,
(A living sermon of the truths he taught),
For this by rules severe his life he squared,
That all might see the doctrine which they heard."

141 *Country*. Of course, in its narrower sense of 'country-side,' 'neighbourhood.'

142 *Passing*. Here, as often, an adverb; 'exceedingly.' Here 'passing rich' is 'more than rich.' Cf. 'passing strange,' 'passing fair,' &c.

Forty pounds. Not an unusual income in those days for a country parson, nor even now in parts of Cumberland and Westmoreland.

143 *Ran his godly race*. A metaphor very common in St. Paul; e.g. 1 *Cor.* ix. 24; *Phil.* ii. 13, 14, &c.; also *Heb.* xii. 1. Cf. also in the *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog*, introduced in chap. xvii. of the *Vicar of Wakefield*—

"In Islington there was a man
Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran,
Where'er he went to pray."

144 *His place*; i.e. position.

145 *Unpractised to*. This use of the infinitive is a Latinism. Cf. l. 161, "Careless their merits to scan." *Vide* l. 195.

146 *By doctrines*, &c. This line qualifies only the words, 'to

seek for power,' and not 'to fawn.' To emulate the conduct, for instance, of the celebrated 'Vicar of Bray.'

148 *More skilled.* 'Being, as he was, more skilled to raise,' &c.

149 *Vagrant train.* 'Troops of wandering beggars.'

150 *Chid*, &c.; *i.e.* 'reproved them for their vagabond course of life, but relieved their present necessities.'

151 *Long-remembered*; *i.e.* 'since he had tramped for many years on the same beat.' Cf. the picture of the Scotch Blue-Gown, or King's Bedesman, in the *Antiquary*.

153 *Spendthrift.* 'One who spends the savings of thrift;' *i.e.* 'of thriving folk.' One of a large and expressive class of compound words, many of which have died out: we have still in use 'tell-tale,' 'scarecrow,' 'turncoat,' 'dare-devil,' 'lick-spittle,' 'skinflint,' and others; while 'smell-feast,' 'claw-back,' 'reel-pot,' 'martext,' 'carry-tale,' 'mumble-news,' 'lack-love,' 'pick-purse,' 'swash-buckler,' 'spit-venom,' 'kill-joy,' and others equally forcible, have died out. Herrick uses 'dingthrift,' Beaumont and Fletcher, 'wastethrift,' Holingshed, 'scapethrift.' But for further instances, *vide* Trench, *English Past and Present*, lecture iii.

155 *Broken.* 'Broken down;' *i.e.* by age, &c.; or, like Virgil's phrase, "Fracti bello."—*Æneid*, ii. 13.

157 *Done.* This word finishes the line somewhat tamely: 'finished.'

158 *Crutch.* From Lat. 'crux,' 'a cross.' The old soldier used it as a substitute for a musket.

159 *Glow.* 'To look bright,' 'to flush with ardour.'

161 *Careless*, &c. 'Not caring to look closely into,' &c. For this construction of an infinitive after an adjective, cf. l. 145.

162 *His pity*, &c. 'The generous impulse of pity prompted him to give before charity, which is more deliberate in its action, could come into play.'

163 *To relieve*, &c. An infinitival clause standing as subject to 'was.'

164 *His failings*; *i.e.* the encouragement of vagrancy, mendicancy, and perhaps imposture, arose only from an excess of the virtues of compassion, humanity, &c.

165 *Prompt.* Cf. Dryden, as above—

"Yet still he was at hand, without request,
To serve the sick, to succour the distressed," &c.

168 *To the skies*; *i.e.* 'away from the nest to try its wings, and practise its powers of flight.'

170 *Allured.* Here, though rarely, in a good sense.

Led the way. By setting an example in his own life, actions speaking louder than words. Cf. Dryden, as above.

171 *Parting.* 'Departing.' Cf. 'parting summer,' l. 4.

172 *Dismayed*; *i.e.* 'terrified the dying man.'

173 *Champion*. The priest of the church militant defying the power of the evil one over the soul. Derived from 'campus,' 'a field'—especially of battle; and perhaps, from the varied use of the 'Campus Martius' at Rome, as a place for drill, games, athletic contests, &c.

174 *Fled*. Generally used neuter, here active = 'flee from;' but the use is not uncommon. Cf. *Idylls of the King*, v. *Guinevere* I.—
"Queen Guinevere had fled the court."—TENNYSON.

175 *Came down*; i.e. from heaven.

176 *Faltering*. 'Failing,' 'hesitating;' probably like 'fault,' from Lat. 'fallos,' to 'deceive;' and more distantly akin to 'fail,' 'fall,' σφάλλω.

Accents. Properly, some marked stress or modulation of the voice, or a sign to indicate these; but poetically used for 'words' or 'speech' generally. Cf. Longfellow's *Excelsior*—

"And like a silver clarion rung

The accents of that unknown tongue."

Derived from Lat. 'ad' and 'cantus,' 'a song;' from 'cano,' 'I sing.'

Whispered. As being incapable of distinct articulation.

Praise; i.e. to God.

177 *Unaffected*. 'Without any unreal assumption of devotion.'

179 *Truth*, &c. The power of truth, when preached by him, was double. Cf. Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*—

"And truths divine came mended from that tongue."

180 *And fools*. So powerful was the force both of his words and his example.

181 *The service past*. Nominative absolute, past = finished.'

182 *Steady zeal*. Opposed to the temporary enthusiasm excited by less perfect characters. Some editions of less authority have 'ready,' "as soon as opportunity offered."

183 *Wile*. 'Trick,' 'artifice.' The same word as 'guile.' For the change of letters cf. 'ward' and 'guard,' 'war' and Fr. 'guerre;' and Eng. 'waste,' Fr. 'gâter,' Lat. 'vastare.'

184 *Plucked*. 'To snatch or pull at.' The common use of the word at the universities is derived from an old custom of 'plucking' the proctor's gown, as a sign of vetoing the conferring of the degree.

185 *Smile*. Strictly this word ought scarcely to be so soon repeated, cf. on l. 51; but it may be intentional. "They sought his smile; his smile was given; he did not disappoint their hopes."

A parent's warmth. He was not only as a pastor to his flock, a phrase that implies some superiority or distinction, as of a sacerdotal caste, but as a father among his children.

186 *Welfare*. Cf. on l. 51.

189-192 A simile expressing at once the contrast between, and the union of, the complete sympathy that "rejoices with

them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep," and the absolute serenity characteristic of the perfect Christian; the former being the "rolling clouds that are spread about the mountain's breast," the latter the "eternal sunshine that settles on its head." Lord Lytton (*Miscellaneous Works*, vol. i. p. 65) points out that this is the only instance in which Goldsmith can be convicted of an imitation so direct as to amount to plagiarism. He has traced the simile to its origin in a poem by the Abbé de Chaulieu, who lived 1639-1720, and whose verses were most in fashion when Goldsmith travelled on the Continent.

"Tel qu'un rocher dont la tête
Egalant le Mont Athos,
Voit à ses pieds la tempête
Troubler le calme des flots,
La mer autour bruit et gronde;
Malgré ses émotions,

Sur son front élevé règne une paix profonde."

"Every one," adds Lord Lytton, "must own that, in copying, Goldsmith wonderfully improved the original, and his application of the image to the Christian preacher gives it a moral sublimity to which it has no pretension in Chaulieu, who applies it to his own philosophical patience under his physical maladies."

190 *Swells*. The nominative to this verb is the relative 'that.' 'Some tall cliff' is resumed in the word 'its' in l. 191. The point of the simile lies in the last two lines.

193 *Straggling*; i.e. 'no longer neatly trimmed as of yore.'

Skirts the way. 'Forms the edge of the road.' The meaning of 'skirt' as an article of dress is its original signification, as the word comes from the same root as 'shirt.'

194 *Unprofitably gay*; i.e. with the golden brightness of blossoms which, though beautiful and gay, are of no use.

195 *Skilled to rule*. Cf. lines 145, 148, 161.

196 *School*. From Greek σχολή. 1. Leisure, spare time. 2. That in which leisure is employed; a learned discussion, or philosophical disputation or lecture. 3. The place where such lectures or discussions were held. 4. The place where any instruction is given. Cf. similar changes of meaning in Latin 'ludus.'

197 *Stern to view*; i.e. 'to be viewed.' A very common use of the inf. act; e.g. Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, canto i. stanza 1—

"Word and spell, deadly to hear, and deadly to tell."

198 *Truant*. Properly any 'wanderer' or 'vagabond;' but especially applied to a boy who, from wilful idleness or any similar cause, absents himself from school.

Knew. Supply 'him well' from the first clause of the line.

199 *Boding*. At first 'to bode' meant 'to portend' either

good or evil; but the meaning has nowadays become limited to the latter. Cf. Shakespeare's *Tempest*, act iii. scene 1—

"Invest, what best is boded me, to mischief."

and *Macbeth*, iv. 1—

"Sweet bodements! Good!"

200 *Disaster*. 'The unpropitiousness of the stars;' hence 'any misfortune or calamity.' This is one of a whole family of words by which the old pseudo-science of astrology has impressed itself for ever on our language. Thus, though we have ceased to believe that a man's disposition is regulated by the planet under which he is born, we still characterize our acquaintances as 'saturnine,' 'jovial,' or 'mercurial;' and speak of their enterprises as 'ill-starred' when their good fortune is not 'in the ascendant.'

201 *Counterfeited*. 'Pretended,' 'assumed.' From 'contra' and 'facio,' 'to make in opposition to,' especially 'in opposition to the reality.'

203 *Circling round*. 'Passed round the circle of boys.'

205 *Aught*. 'Anything,' contracted from Old English 'awiht;' connected with 'whit' and 'wight.'

208 *Cipher*. A word found in most European languages; but probably from the Arabic.

209 *Terms*. The days of session and vacation observed in universities and law courts.

Tide. Akin to Ger. 'zeit;' originally a 'time' or 'season,' as in Whitsun-tide, Easter-tide; hence, from their periodic recurrence, the ebb and flow of the sea. Here used in its usual sense, "Could calculate the hours of high and low water."

Presage. 'To forebode,' 'predict.' From Lat. 'prae,' 'before,' and 'sagio,' 'to perceive quickly by the senses or intellect.' Akin to 'sage,' 'sagacious.'

210 *Gauge*; i.e. 'calculate by means of a 'gauge,' or measuring-rod, the contents of a barrel or other vessel,' usually filled with excisable liquors. From Fr. 'jalaye,' a wine measure (English 'gallon'), whence 'gualger,' to measure.

212 *For e'en*. He did not know when, according to all the laws of argumentation, he was beaten.

218 *Triumphed*. At any rate in his own eyes and those of the rustics, who were led by their ears rather than their brains.

Forgot. This omission of -en in past participles is common in the classical English poets, especially Shakespeare. For a more modern instance cf. Tennyson's *Two Voices*—

"And is not our first year forgot?"

219 *Thorn*. Here, of course, the tree, and not the spine, as often in poetry. Cf. Tennyson's *Two Voices*—

"The thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow."

221 *Nut-brown draughts*. Draughts of nut-brown ale. This epithet 'nut-brown' is applied in old ballads to the complexion of a brunette, as in Prior's ballad of the *Nut-Brown Maid*, and also to ale. Cf. Milton's *L'Allegro*, l. 100—

"Then to the spicy nut-brown ale."

Inspired; i.e. the drinkers.

222 *Mirth . . . toil*. Abstract for concrete. Cf. "Laeli jucunda senectus." See line 14.

224 *News much older*. A touch of hyperbolical humour. Yet it might be literally true of the exploits of English arms in the East and West Indies.

225 *Imagination, &c.* The beginning of this description is intentionally pompous, to heighten the humour of the sketch.

226 *Parlour*. Originally 'a room in a monastery for conversation'; hence 'any sitting-room.' From Fr. 'parler,' 'to speak,' which comes through the Low-Latin 'parabolare,' from Gk. παραβολή, 'parable.' Here the word is used as an adjective, on the analogy of phrases, like 'village statesmen' (line 223), 'country folk,' &c.

227 *Wall . . . floor . . . clock, &c.* All these substantives, and others as far as 'hearth' in line 233, are in apposition to 'splendours.'

228 *Clicked*. This word, like 'tick,' more commonly used to express the noise of a clock, is formed from the sound. Cf. on line 28 for a family of words of similar origin.

231 *And use*; i.e. probably to hide deficiencies in the paper, &c.

232 *Twelve good rules*. "These rules were: 1, Urge no healths; 2, Profane no divine ordinances; 3, Touch no state matters; 4, Reveal no secrets; 5, Pick no quarrels; 6, Make no companions; 7, Maintain no ill opinions; 8, Keep no bad company; 9, Encourage no vice; 10, Make no long meals; 11, Repeat no grievances; 12, Lay no wagers."—HALES' *Longer English Poems*. These rules were ascribed to Charles I. Cf. Crabbe's *Parish Register*, pt. i.—

"There is King Charles and all his golden rules,
Who proved misfortune's was the best of schools."

Royal game of goose. Not, as has been supposed, the ordinary game of "fox and goose," but a much more elaborate pastime, perhaps called 'royal' to distinguish it from the former. It is described at some length in Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, bk. iv. ch. 2. A board was divided into sixty-two compartments, and sixty-three, the winning number, was in the centre. Through these compartments each player moved on his counter or mark according to the throw of a pair of dice, and the one who first reached 63 won the game. At number five was a bridge that claimed a forfeit at passing; at nineteen, an alehouse, where a forfeit was exacted, and the player had to stop two

throws; at thirty, a fountain, where the traveller had to pay for washing; at forty-two, a labyrinth that carried him back to twenty-three; at fifty-two, a prison, where he must rest until relieved by another casting the same throw; at fifty-eight, the grave, whence he was doomed to begin the game again; and at sixty-one, the goblet, which he had to pay to taste. It will be seen from this that the game has plenty of modern representatives. It was called the game of the goose because at every fourth and fifth compartment in succession a goose was depicted; and if the counter happened by the throw of the dice to fall upon a goose, it was moved forward double the number of the throw.

234 *Aspen*. A kind of poplar. A favourite simile among poets, on account of the tremulousness of its leaves. Cf. Scott, *Marmion*, canto vi. stanza 30, where he describes woman as

“Variable as the shade

By the light quivering aspen made.”

Fennel. A strong-smelling plant with yellow flowers.

Gay. Agrees with ‘hearth.’

236 *Ranged*. Participle for ‘arranged.’

O’er the chimney. Rather ‘on the chimney-piece.’

227-236 Cf. an extract from a letter of Goldsmith to his brother, Rev. H. Goldsmith, mentioned before as being the original of the portrait of the country parson: “Your last letter, I repeat it, was too short; you should have given me your opinion of the heroi-comical poem which I sent you; you remember I intended to introduce the hero of the poem as lying in a paltry alehouse. You may take the following specimen of the manner, which I flatter myself is quite original. The room in which he lies may be described somewhat in this way:

The window, patched with paper, lent a ray,
That feebly showed the state in which he lay.
The sanded floor which grits beneath the tread,
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread;
The game of goose was there exposed to view,
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew;
The seasons, framed with listing, found a place,
And Prussia’s monarch showed his lamp-black face.
The morn was cold; he views with keen desire
A rusty grate unconscious of a fire;
An unpaid reckoning on the frieze was scored,
And five cracked tea-cups dressed the chimney-board.

* * * * *

All this is taken, you see, from nature. It is a good remark of Montaigne’s, that the wisest men often have friends with whom they do not care how much they play the fool. Take my present follies as instances of regard.”

Yours sincerely, F. B. [Signature]

237 *Splendour*. This word carries back the thoughts to l. 227, and resumes the purposely exaggerated loftiness of language.

238 *Reprieve*. 'Give to the inn a respite from the decay to which it was doomed.'

240 *Importance*. That there he can find people to wait upon him, and bring him what he orders; and so he may fancy himself no longer a mere drudge.

241 *Peasant*. Cf. on *Traveller*, l. 83.

Repair. Cf. on *Traveller*, l. 15.

242 *To*; i.e. 'to a place that can give,' &c.

Oblivion. 'Forgetfulness.' Lat. 'obliviscor.'

244 *Ballad*. From Gk. βαλλίζω (from βάλλω, 'to throw') 'to throw the leg about'—a meaning especially common in Sicily and Magna Graecia—came the low Latin 'Ballare,' 'to hop,' 'dance.' Hence, in English—1, 'ball'—French, 'bal'—'an entertainment of dancing;' 2, 'ballet'—diminutive—'a little ball,' 'a scene of dramatic dancing;' and 3, 'ballad,' originally 'a song sung during or to a dance.' Hence 'a popular narrative poem,' 'a simple poem suited for singing.'

Prevail. 'Be prevalent,' 'common,' or 'rife;' 'be often heard.'

248 *Mantling*. 'Covering as with a cloak;' so, 'covering the cup or glass with froth;' often used of wine frothing, bubbling, or sparkling. Cf. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, civ.—

"But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm."

For another use of the word, cf. l. 132.

Bliss. Akin to 'blithe;' so that the 'mantling bliss' is the liquor which 'maketh glad the heart of man' as it mantles or froths in the cup.

249 *Half willing*, &c. 'Thinking it proper to refuse, yet really wishing to taste.' For a similar idea of half-heartedness, cf. the "digito male pertinaci."—HORACE, *Od.* i, ix. 24.

250 *Kiss the cup*; i.e. 'just touch it with her lips.' Cf. Sir W. Scott's *Marmion*, canto v. 12, in Lady Heron's song about Lochinvar—

"The bride kissed the goblet, the knight quaffed it up;"
and Ben Jonson's well-known line—

"Or leave a kiss but in the cup."

251 *Yes!* As if answering some imaginary objector, who asks, "But are these pleasures really of any value, in spite of the derision of the rich and the disdain of the proud?"

252 *Train*. Simply used for a collection of people, and cannot be pressed into any special meaning. Cf. l. 320, "gorgeous train," and lines 17 and 337.

253 *Congenial*. Supply 'more' before this.

254 *Native*. Here for 'inborn,' or 'natural;' opposed to 'artificial.' Cf. Shakespeare's *King John*, act iii. scene 4—

"But now will canker sorrow eat my bud,
And chase the native beauty from his cheek."

Gloss. Strictly 'brightness,' or 'lustre' (akin to 'glass'); so especially, in a bad sense, 'mere external polish or show.'

253, 254 The substantive verb 'is' must be supplied to make the construction complete.

255 *Spontaneous*. 'That arise of their own accord, without the artificial forcing of society,' &c.

Joys. The objective case after "adopt," l. 256.

Play; i.e. 'action' = where nature has free play or action.

256 *First-born*. 'As being inborn or natural, and so preceding artificial or acquired pleasures.'

257 *Vacant*. In no bad sense; cf. 'vacant of cares;' and l. 122.

259 *Pomp*. In the sense of 'train,' or 'procession.' Cf. l. 66.

Masquerade. "A ball which people attend with their faces concealed by masks." 'Mask' is literally 'anything that causes laughter,' of Arabic derivation.

260 *Freaks*, &c. 'Capricious tricks of luxurious and excessive wealth.'

261 *These*; i.e. (l. 259) pomp, masquerade.

262 So-called pleasure, from the toil and weariness and consequent heart-sickness of its votaries, becomes a real pain.

265 *Survey*; i.e. 'observe.'

267 "*Wide the limits stand*" = 'how great is the difference.'

269 *Proud*. In construction an adjective agreeing with 'tide,' though in sense adverbial, to be taken with 'swells.'

Frighted. 'Which form the freight or cargo of a ship;' it would be more naturally used of the ship than the cargo. Cf. 'fraught' = 'laden or freighted.'

Ore. Cf. on *Traveller*, l. 398.

270 *Folly*. Personification. "Fools hail them with shouts from the shore as they see them approaching."

272 *Rich men flock*. The country becomes the centre of the wealth and commerce of the world.

273 Of course an increase in the supply of the precious metals, and in the demand for a commodity, will raise the price of the commodity, unless there is a corresponding change in the facility and cheapness of its production.

276 *A place*, &c. 'A space that supplied means of subsistence to many poor.' Cf. Horace, *Od.* 2, xv., where the poet makes identically the same complaint, that the rich man's palaces, ponds, and pleasure-grounds are occupying lands once productive and useful—

"Iam pauca aratro jugera regiae
Moles relinquent, undique latius

Extenta visentur Lucrino
 Stagna lacu, platanusque cœlebs
 Evinct ulmos."

278 *Equipage*. Literally 'furniture or outfit of any sort.' So here especially, 'carriages and retinue;' often now for 'a carriage' simply.

279 *Silken*. In prose would be put with 'robe,' not 'sloth;' but the meaning is clear.

280 This line would most naturally mean that half the neighbouring fields were occupied in producing the material; but this is impossible, if the material was silk. Hence it must mean, that the rent of these fields was all spent on this one robe.

282 *Indignant*. Adjective for adverb. 'Contemptuously,' a transference to the house of the feelings of its owner. Cf. "the proud tide," l. 269.

283 *Around*, &c. We have to export our useful commodities; e.g. calicoes, worsteds, iron, &c., in order to import the luxuries of the rich from all parts of the world.

285 *All*. 'Entirely.' Adjective for adverb.

286 *Barren*. 'Unproductive' in its economical sense.

287 *Female*. This use of the word strikes nowadays rather curiously on the ear, as it is now used almost exclusively in contrast to 'male.'

Plain. Not in the modern sense, 'ugly,' 'ill-favoured,' but 'simple in dress,' 'without ornament,' the "simplex munditiis" of Horace (*Od.* i, v.).

288 *Secure to please*; i.e. of pleasing. Cf. l. 145.

290 *Nor shares*. 'And allows no artificial means to share the triumph which the beauty of her eyes is sufficient of itself to win.'

291 *Frail*. 'Easy or ready to break.' From Lat. 'fragilis,' 'frango,' 'I break;' here 'transient,' 'fading.'

Charms are frail. Cf. *Prov.* xxxi. 30: "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain."

293 *Solicitous to bless* = 'anxious to shower her favours round,' 'anxious that her conscious effort to charm should be successful.'

294 *Glaring impotence*. The more striking the toilette, the more glaring is the impossibility that it can ever restore to her the power to charm. 'Glare,' cf. on *Traveller*, l. 71.

295 *Thus fares*. 'Such is the lot or condition of.' On 'fare,' cf. l. 51.

297 *Verging*. 'As it verges,' or 'moves with a downward tendency.'

Its splendour. The growth of luxury and ostentation being a sign of weakness and increasing decay.

298 *Vistas*. From Ital. 'vista,' a 'view' or 'prospect;' from Lat. 'video,' 'I see;' especially 'a view through an avenue;' and so sometimes 'the avenue itself.'

298 *Palaces*. Cf. *Traveller*, l. 179.

299 *Scourged*, &c. 'Driven out by the scourge, or torments of hunger, from the land which his own labour had made fertile and lovely.'

Smiling. Cf. l. 35.

300 *Band*. 'His family,' used vaguely, as 'train' often is. Cf. l. 252.

301 *Arm*, &c. 'Without a single hand being extended to help him.'

302 *A garden*, &c. 'At once the garden of the rich and the grave of the poor.'

303 *Poverty—and pride* (304). 'The poor and the proud;' abstract for concrete. Cf. l. 14.

304 *'Scape* A very common prodelision. Cf. the word 'scape-goat,' or *King Lear*, act i. scene 4—

"The fault would not 'scape censure."

In many words beginning with 'e,' and derived from the French, the initial vowel, which was prefixed to facilitate the pronunciation, is dropped so frequently as to make the shortened form a legitimate word. Cf. 'squire' and 'esquire,' 'stablish' and 'establish,' 'state' and 'estate,' 'spy' and 'espy.'

Pressure. The ever-extending enclosures of their prouder neighbours.

Contiguous. (From Lat. 'con' 'tango,' 'to touch') so 'adjoining.' Cf. 'the mortification of contiguous tyranny.'—*Vicar of Wakefield*.

305 *Strayed*. Participle, agreeing with 'he' (l. 306).

Fenceless limits. 'A tract not divided off by hedges,' &c. When were the chief Enclosure Acts passed?

306 *Blade*. 'Anything flat and thin,' hence especially 'of grass;' other special uses, 'of a sword,' 'an oar,' 'the shoulder-bone.'

307 *Fenceless fields*. 'Fields once, though no longer, fenceless.' Objective case, governed by 'divide.'

Sons of wealth. A poetical periphrasis for 'the wealthy.' Cf. 'The sons of harmony' for 'musicians,' 'the sons of toil' for 'labourers,' 'the sons of pleasure.' l. 313.

308 *Bare-worn*. 'Worn bare of grass,' so little open land being left to the poor.

Denied; i.e. to the poor owner of the flock.

265-308 It must be remembered that this poem was published (1770) at a time of general despondency and hopelessness as to the political future of England. England was, it was thought, on the verge of bankruptcy, owing to the increase of its national debt to the then astounding amount of nearly £150,000,000. Its population was held to be rapidly decreasing; so Arthur Young writes in this very year (*Northern Tour*, vol. iv. p. 556):

"It is asserted by those writers who affect to run down our affairs, that, rich as we are, our population has suffered; that we have lost a million and a half of people since the Revolution; and that we are at present declining in numbers." Thus Dr. Price estimates the population of England, in 1777, at 4,763,000 souls; and Arthur Young, in 1770, at 8,500,000. The latter, according to Charles Knight, in his *History of England* (vol. vii. chap. 1), seems to be about a million and a quarter over the right number, while the former falls short of it by more than double that sum. In any case it is certain that for sixty or seventy years previously, during the whole of the 18th century, England had been steadily, though sometimes slowly, progressing, in extension of manufactures, improved methods of agriculture, reclamation of waste lands, and development of the means of internal communication. The emigration, and enclosure of commons, of which the poet so pathetically complains, were in themselves proofs of the increase of population, and a consequently increased demand for the means of subsistence.

309 *Sped.* Participle from 'to speed,' here = 'gone.'

310 *To see*, &c. It is the contrast which is galling. Cf. *Traveller*, l. 177.

Profusion. Abundance.

311 *Baneful.* 'Pernicious,' 'bane,' in Old English, meant 'poison.' Cf. 'henbane,' as the name of a plant; 'ratsbane,' in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, act iii. scene 4—

"Sets ratsbane by its porridge."

312 *Pamper.* 'To overfeed,' 'glut;' a word of doubtful derivation: either from Old French 'pamprer,' from 'pampre,' 'a leafy vine-branch,' Lat. 'pampinus;' or a stronger form of 'pap,' the first infantine cry for food.

Thin. 'Decrease the number of.'

313 *Sons of pleasure.* Cf. l. 307.

314 *Extorted.* 'Wrung by unjust or oppressive means.'

315 *Brocade.* 'Silk on which figures are wrought in a pattern,' especially if the figures are raised. From Fr. 'brocher,' 'to prick,' or 'emboss,' connected with 'to broach,' and the substantive 'brooch.'

316 *Artist.* Not uncommon in earlier English for 'artisan;' 'artisan' was also used for 'artist.' Dr. Johnson, in his *Dictionary*, does not recognize the specialized meaning of 'painter.' Cf. Waller, *To the King*—

"How to build ships, and dreadful ordnance cast,
Instruct the artists, and reward their haste."

317 *Long-drawn.* A compound used by Gray (*Elegy in a Country Churchyard*)—

"Long-drawn aisle and fretted vault."

Pomp. Cf. line 259.

318 *Glooms*; i.e. 'looks sombre or terrible.' A neuter verb (used active line 363). A sight now almost unknown, though common enough even sixty years ago, before the commencement (A.D. 1810) of Sir S. Romilly's successive onslaughts in the House of Commons on the severity of the criminal law.

319 *Dome*. Cf. *The Traveller*, line 159.

320 *Gorgeous*. Originally from ornamented 'gorgets,' or pieces of armour on the neck. So used of any ornament worn there, and consequently of any striking ornament at all. The word 'gorget,' and 'gorge,' is from Lat. 'gurgēs,' 'a whirlpool;' probably onomatopœic in origin. Cf. 'gurgle,' 'gargle,' &c.

Train. Cf. on line 252.

321 *Grandeur*. Abstract for concrete. Cf. on lines 14, 303.

323 *Sure*. Used for adverb 'surely.'

Scenes. What case?

324 *Denote*. 'Indicate,' 'are signs of.'

323-4 These two lines are meant to express the hasty and thoughtless exclamation of the spectator; and the poet summons him to a more serious view by his question in the next line.

327 *Village plenty*. For this use of 'village' as an adjective, cf. line 17. 'The wholesome plenty that a village would afford, as contrasted with the unhealthy luxury of the town.'

328 *Innocence*. Abstract for concrete. Cf. lines 14, 303, 321, 327.

329 *Might adorn*. Used for 'might have once adorned.'

330 *Sweet*, &c. This is not quite grammatical, being a mixture of two constructions: (1) 'Sweet as the primrose which peeps beneath the thorn;' (2) 'Just as the primrose peeps sweetly beneath the thorn.'

Primrose. Literally 'prima rosa,' 'the first rose' of spring. A corruption from the Fr. 'primerole,' 'primeverole,' Lat. 'primula veris.' In the '*Grete Herball*' we find the form 'pryme rolles.' For similar corruptions cf. 'gillyflower,' from Fr. 'giroflée;' 'quarter-session roses,' Fr. 'quatre saisons;' 'Jerusalem artichokes,' Fr. 'girasol.'

331 *Lost*. Participle, agreeing with 'she' in the next line.

333 *Pinched*. A common and expressive metaphor. So also 'nipped' with cold.

334 *Deplores*. Weeps bitterly over. Lat. 'de,' 'ploro,' 'to weep.'

335 *Idly*. Not with any wilfully wicked purpose, but in mere weariness of the regular occupation and monotonous life of the country.

Ambitious of. A curious use of the genitive. 'Anxiously aspiring to taste the joys and gaiety of the town.'

336 *Wheel*. 'Spinning-wheel,' universal then, and unknown now.

Country brown. The colour, 'russet,' or 'reddish-brown,' in which the poets have always loved to attire the country folk. Cf. Dryden, *Theocritus*, Pref.: "Like a fair shepherdess in her country russet." So Shakespeare uses it without any idea of colour = 'homely.' *Love's Labour Lost*, v. 2—"russet yeas."

338 *Fair.* Used quite generally, as 'pleasing in appearance,' 'manners,' &c.

Tribes. Merely for 'inhabitants.' Literally 'a third part' (from Lat. 'tres') or division of the Roman people.

339 A supposition introduced by the poet to facilitate the transition to the subject of emigration.

341 *Clime.* From Gk. κλίνω, 'to make to bend,' or 'to slope;' hence substantive κλίμα, an 'inclination' or 'slope.' Hence 'the slope of the earth from the equator to the pole,' which Greek geographers supposed to exist. So any 'region' or 'zone of the earth' (in which sense the word is used in Aristotle, and which it bears also in this passage); and hence finally 'the prevalent temperature or weather dependent on the latitudinal position of a district.'

Scene. In apposition to 'climes.'

342 *Convex.* Literally from the participle of 'conveho,' 'carried together;' so of anything 'bulging out,' 'rising to a round form on the outside,' 'vaulted;' frequently used in Latin of the earth and the heavens; e.g. Virgil—

Ecl. iv. 50: "Nutantem convexo pondere mundum."

Æn. iv. 451: "Tædet cœli convexa tueri."

Intrude. Literally to 'thrust oneself upon;' so here of the unwelcome intervention of half the world between the colony and the mother-country.

343 *Torrid.* From Lat. 'torridus,' from 'torreo,' to 'burn' or 'parch.' Cf. the 'torrid zone.'

344 *Altama.* The poet probably means the Alatomaha, a river in Georgia, one of the southernmost and hottest of the United States.

To; i.e. 'in consonance with' or 'accompaniment to.'

345 *Far different.* Understand 'are' in the sentence; and for the inversion of the order, cf. note on l. 47.

Before; i.e. in the mother-country.

347 'Suns.' 'Woods,' 349; 'fields,' 351; in apposition to 'terrors,' l. 346.

Downward. More 'directly vertical' as nearer the Equator.

348 *Intolerable day.* 'A heat that in the day-time is beyond endurance.' For 'day,' not in the sense of a definite period of time, but of the light or brightness of the sun, cf. Pope's *Messiah*: "And on the sightless eyeball pour the day;" and also cf. l. 41.

349 *Matted.* Where the foliage is so luxuriant as to grow

together in a tangled mass. Every earlier traveller in America remarked the grandeur of form and size in the trees, the magnificent luxuriance of their growth, and the depth of verdure. "The trees in many instances rise to a stupendous height, like columns, not spreading out into branches, but having their trunks clothed with a rich drapery of ivy, vines, and other creepers. Underwood is generally wanting; yet certain moist tracts are crowded with a particularly dense species called cane brakes, almost impenetrable to man, and the retreat of bears and panthers." This is not specially true of Georgia, which, owing to the very uniform level, is often arid or swampy.

'Forget to sing.' 'Overcome by the mid-day heat.'

350 *Silent bats.* "Numerous individuals select a large tree for their resort, and suspend themselves with the claws of their posterior extremities to the naked branches. They pass the greater portion of the day in sleep, hanging motionless."—Dr. Horsfield's account of Javanese bats in *Penny Encyclopedia*.

351 *Poisonous fields.* Cf. the description of the settlement of Eden in Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*, chap. xxiii.: "Where the very trees took the aspect of huge weeds, begotten of the slime from which they sprung, by the sun that burnt them up; where fatal maladies, seeking whom they might infect, came forth at night in misty shapes, and, creeping out upon the water, hunted them like spectres until day; where even the blessed sun, shining down on festering elements of corruption and disease, became a horror," &c.

352 *Gathers death.* 'Collects its poison.'

354 *Rattling terrors.* The rattle of the rattle-snake ('*crotalus horridus*'), the most venomous of all American snakes, is composed of several, sometimes of as many as twenty-four, horny membranous cells, articulated one within the other, so that the point of the first cell reaches as far as the base of the third; these are so loose as to allow the cells inside to strike against the sides of the outer rings, and cause a rattling noise.

355 *Tigers.* A poetical license; the American tiger or jaguar is unknown on the banks of the Alatomaha.

Wait. Here transitive, for 'wait for,' or 'await.'

Hapless. Cf. on line 8.

357 *Tornado.* A word of Spanish origin; literally 'a whirling wind,' from Lat. 'tornare,' 'to turn,' or 'round off,' from 'tornus;' Gk. *τόπος*, 'a lathe.'

Mad. A strong epithet, as applied to the capricious and unrestrained violence of a storm.

358 *Mingling.* A strong figure, common enough in the Latin poets. Cf. Virgil, *Æn.* i. 134—

"Iam caelum terramque meo sine numine, venti,
Miscere et tantas audetis tollere moles."

Landscape. The last half of this word is another form of 'shape;' the word at first meant, 'the shape or aspect of any portion of land which the eye can see at once;' hence used very often for a picture of this portion, and here for the land itself. Earle (*Philology of the English Tongue*) says that we have borrowed the word from the Dutch painters.

360 *Cooling brook.* In these lines every epithet is carefully chosen to heighten the contrast: the cooling brook as opposed to the huge river exhaling fetid vapours from its swampy banks; the grassy vested green contrasting with the scorched and arid plain or the rank luxuriance of the impenetrable brake; the breezy grove, vocal with the song of birds, with the forest which no cooling breeze can penetrate, and where the birds refuse to sing; while the love-scenes that are sheltered beneath the shade of the grove are effectively set over against the venomous reptiles and savage beasts that lurk in the recesses of the vast forest.

Grassy-vested. 'Grassy' used adverbially; 'clothed with grass.'

361 *Covert.* Literally 'anything covered or secret.' So 'any grove or plantation that affords covering or protection;' especially used as the retreat of a fox.

Warbling. Epithet transferred from the birds in the grove to the grove itself. Cf. *Traveller*, l. 187.

362 *Thefts of harmless love.* Such as the stealing of a heart, or a kiss—

"Snatched hasty from the side-long maid,
On purpose guardless, or pretending sleep."

—THOMSON, *Winter*.

363 *Gloomed.* Here used as an active verb; 'to make gloomy,' in l. 318, as a neuter verb.

366 *Bowers.* Cf. l. 6.

Looked their last. 'Last,' adjective agreeing with 'look,' understood; a not uncommon idiom. Cf. Scott, in Wilfred's song in *Rokeby*, canto v. 13—

"And I have looked and loved my last."

367 *Long farewell.* This phrase may mean either a farewell for a long time, or for ever, as in Wolsey's speech, *Henry VIII.* act iii. scene 2—

"Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness;"
or a protracted leave-taking.

368 *Seats.* In the Latin sense cf. 'sedes,' 'home,' or 'settlement;' in this sense usually restricted in English to country mansions of large size.

Main. Literally 'strength' or 'might.' Cf. 'by might and main,' hence the chief part; e.g. 'the main body of an army,' so 'the ocean' as opposed to a narrow sea. Cf. the 'mainland,' as opposed to a small island, the Spanish Main, the south coast of America, as opposed to the West Indies.

371 *Sire*. From Old Fr. 'sire,' Fr. 'sieur,' from Lat. 'senior,' comparative of 'senex,' 'an old man.'

Prepared. A verb, not a participle.

373 *Conscious*. 'Conscious of its own integrity.' The phrase is directly imitated from Virgil (*Æn.* xii. 668)—

"Et Furiis agitatus amor, et conscia virtus."

Cf. also *Æn.* i. 604: "Mens sibi conscia recti."

376 *Companion*. Literally 'one with whom bread is eaten.' From Fr. 'compagnon,' Low Lat. 'companium;' from 'panis,' 'bread.'

378 *And left*, &c. 'Was compelled to leave her lover in England to accompany her father to America.'

379 *Plaints*. Usually in the longer form, 'complaints.' This is however sufficiently common. The original idea of the Lat. 'plango,' whence comes Fr. 'plaindre,' is that of 'beating,' and so especially 'beating the breast as a sign of grief.'

380 *Cot*. Cf. on l. 10.

381 *Thoughtless*. 'Unconscious.'

384 *In all the*, &c. 'In grief no less sincere, but less demonstrative, as became a man.'

386 *Like these*. Not referring to anything in the context, but to the general subject of the poem, the innocence and happiness of country life.

387 *Potions*. From Lat. 'potio,' 'a draught;' one of many Latin words which have two derivatives in English, one introduced early through the French 'poison;' the other, at a later period, directly from the Latin form, 'potion.' Cf. 'royal,' 'regal;' 'loyalty,' 'legality;' 'enchantment,' 'incantation.'

387 *Insidious*. 'Treacherous,' 'deceitful.' Lat. 'insidiosus.' From 'insidiæ,' 'ambush.'

389 *By thee*; i.e. luxury. 'By means of luxury they boast,' &c.

390 *Florid*. Just as a flushed and bright complexion is by no means a sure sign of a sound constitution or good state of health.

Not their own. 'Unnaturally produced by the action of luxury.'

391 *Draught*. Of the potions in l. 387.

392 *Rank*. Usually, as in l. 351, of coarse, strong-growing plants.

393 *Sapped*. Literally 'to dig,' probably connected with Gk. σκάπτω; so 'to undermine.' Cf. 'sappers,' as a corps of military engineers.

Sapped their strength. The nominative absolute. 'Luxury, just as a sapper undermines a wall, has eaten away their strength, while the outside still presents a fair show of florid vigour.'

394 *Down*. Notice the treble alliteration in this line.

396 *Business*. The 'work' of destruction is the more common phrase.

397 *Methinks*. Cf. on *Traveller*, l. 283.

Pondering. Literally 'to weigh.' From Lat. 'pondus,' 'a weight,' so 'to weigh mentally.'

398 *Leave the land*. The idea of virtues going from, and returning to, lands according as the conditions were favourable to their growth or the reverse, was a favourite with ancient poets, and has been imitated by modern writers; e.g. of Justice. Virgil, *Geo.* ii. 473—

"extrema per illos

Justitia excedens terris vestigia fecit."

and also *Ecl.* iv. 6—

"Jam redit et virgo; redeunt Saturnia regna."

So Pope, *Messiah*—

"All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail;

Returning Justice lift aloft her scale."

399 *Down*; i.e. to the beach, resumed in 'downward,' l. 401.

400 *Flaps*. A word formed from the sound. Cf. 'flabby.'

401 *Melancholy*. Black (μέλας) bile (χολή) was supposed by ancient physicians to produce a disease causing general gloominess and dejection, almost amounting to insanity. Cf. 'atrabiliar.'

402 *Strand* seems here to be used for the lowest fringe of sand next to the sea, while the shore is the part of the ground above the sand.

Darken. By standing there in a mournful group; or perhaps by their absence.

403 *Contented toil*. Is this necessarily a virtue?

404 *Connubial tenderness*. 'The tenderness of married life.'

405 *Wishes placed above*. Acting up to the apostle's command, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."—*Col.* iii. 2.

408 *Still first to fly*. The poet is here grossly belied by many of his fellows, ancient and modern.

409 *These degenerate times*. As long as people place their golden age or paradise in bygone times, instead of in the future, this will always be the cry: most clearly asserted by Horace (*Od.* iii. vi. 46)—

"Ætas parentum, pejor avis, tulit

Nos nequiores, mox daturos

Progeniem vitiosiore."

Cf. on line 57.

Of shame. Genitive used to avoid another adjective. 'Times of shame' = 'shameful times.' Cf. 'days of ease,' 'hours of pleasure.'

410 *Strike for*. 'Strike a blow to win.'

411 *Nymph*. From Gk. νύμφη, a 'bride.' Hence used more generally in mythology for lovely female spirits inhabiting all

natural objects, and presiding over all pursuits. So Goldsmith addresses poetry as 'dear charming nymph,' just as Virgil (*Ecl.* vii. 21) apostrophizes the muses—

"Nymphae, noster amor, Libethrides."

Decried. Quite literally 'cried down' ('de,' Lat. 'down').

412 *Solitary pride.* Not 'my only pride,' but 'my pride when alone.'

413 *All my bliss.* Cf. Wither's fine lines to his Muse, from *The Shepherd's Hunting*—

"And though for her sake I'm crost,
Though my best hopes I have lost,
And knew she would make my trouble
Ten times more than ten times double,
I should love and keep her too,
Spite of all the world could do.

* * * *

She doth tell me where to borrow
Comfort in the midst of sorrow,
Makes the desolatest place
To her presence be a grace,
And the blackest discontents
To be pleasing ornaments.

* * * *

Therefore, thou best earthly bliss,
I will cherish thee for this,—
Poesy! thou sweet'st content
That e'er heaven to mortals lent,
Though they as a trifle leave thee
Whose dull thoughts cannot conceive thee;
Though thou be to them a scorn
That to nought but earth are born,
Let my life no longer be
Than I am in love with thee," &c. &c.

414 *Keep'st me so.* The complaint of many poets in all ages, whose devotion to their art has brought them more pleasure than profit.

415 *Nobler arts.* Painting, music, &c. Not 'nobler' than poetry, for Goldsmith says that the poetic instinct is the guide to real excellence in these; but 'nobler' contrasted with the manual arts, the *βάραντοι τέχναι*.

417 *Be tried.* Not to be pressed to any very definite meaning. 'Wherever thou mayest essay to sing.'

418 *Torneo's cliffs.* Perhaps near Lake Tornea, in the north of Sweden.

Pambamarca. A mountain in South America, probably one of the Andes, near Quito. For the sentiment, *vide* Gray, *Progress of Poesy*, ii. 2.

419 *Equinoctial*. Used here as equivalent to 'equatorial,' the 'equinoctial' line being an imaginary line in the heavens, corresponding to the equator on the earth. It receives its name from the fact that when the sun crosses it (as it does twice a year, about March 21 and September 23) the night is equal in length to the day.

420 *Polar*. The world at either pole, Arctic or Ant-arctic, but more generally used of the former.

421 *Thy voice*. The voice of poetry, independent of the capricious neglect of one unworthy generation.

422 *Redress*. 'Relieve;' literally 'to make straight again;' as the Fr. 'dresser,' 'droit,' are from the Lat. 'dirigere,' 'directum.'

423 *Strain*. 'A song,' perhaps connected with the ordinary idea of the word by the effort necessary to produce a sustained sound.

424 *Spurn*. Cf. on line 106.

Rage of gain; i.e. for gain; the phrase "lucri furor," used by Seneca.

425 *Of strength*. Governed by 'possessed.'

427-430 These four lines, Boswell tells us, were added by Dr. Johnson.

427 *Trade*. Literally 'trodden way' (connected with 'to tread'); so 'any settled way of life;' hence 'commerce,' &c.

428 *Mole*. From Lat. 'moles,' 'a mass;' so 'a massive structure,' especially of masonry, at the mouth of a harbour, &c., as in Cicero, *Off.* ii. 4: "Moles oppositae fluctibus;" Horace, *Od.* iii. i. 34—

"Jactis in altum molibus."

429 *Self-dependent*. 'Not dependent on any foreign nations for the necessities of life' (i.e. *αὐτάρκης*). This line embodies a very popular argument for Protection.

430 *Rocks*; i.e. natural, as opposed to the artificial structures.

Sky. 'Weather,' an imitation of the classical use of 'caelum.'

Solomon

So about 30 years since

then, I had to return, not of a

proportion

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